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TOOK A FLYING LEAP THROUGH SOME FRENCH
WINDOWS LAST NIGHT IN A GRAND DINING ROOM

SPUD MURPHY
AND
SOME OTHERS

BY
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To
G. G.
and
E. G.

A tribute of love.

PREFACE

When these stories were first written I had no thought that they would ever be given permanent form. However, they received such generous appreciation, and I had so many letters from people in all parts of the world, telling me that they desired a more lasting record, that I began to consider it. My doubts were set at rest by a letter from that master of the art of story-telling, the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, urging me to publish them in book form. A request from such a source comes with the force of a command. I am touched and honoured that one who from my earliest youth has delighted and instructed me with his Cornish stories should find pleasure in anything that I have written.

OWEN S. WATKINS.

Ealing, 1923.

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'SPUD' MURPHY

An 'Old Contemptible'

I.

ON the outbreak of war in August 1914, for some reason known only to the powers in Whitehall, I was ordered to mobilize with the Fifth Division in Phoenix Park, Dublin, instead of with my own Division in London. I crossed to Ireland wondering who my new comrades would prove to be, and if amongst them there would be any whom I already knew. To my joy, I discovered on arrival that of the twelve officers serving in the Ambulance to which I was posted, three were old friends, whilst amongst the rank and file were quite a number with whom I had served in the South African War.

Almost my first greeting came in a rich brogue which I cannot hope to reproduce—I leave it to the imagination of my readers. Throughout this story I shall translate the speech of my hero into ordinary common-place English.

'And it's Mr. Watkins himself, glory be! Is it 14 Field Ambulance that's to have you? It's pleased the boys will be when they hear it.'

I turned to see a strangely familiar face, lit up by an impish grin, and I searched my mind for the name that belonged to it. Then I saw a vision of a South

African farm, a man chasing a pig with a view to supplementing his rations, and myself weak with laughter as I watched.

‘Why, it’s Spud—Spud Murphy! Are you as big a scoundrel as you used to be in the old days?’

And we were shaking hands like brothers.

‘It’s a reformed character I am,’ he said, with conscious virtue. ‘And, sure, if it’s a batman you’re wanting, it’s myself who would care for you like the apple of my eye.’

‘No, old friend,’ I laughed back. ‘I’m not as green as that. I want a batman who will do some work, and not one that is always in the guard room under arrest. You’re a Roman Catholic; go and offer your services to your own Padre.’

His grin broadened.

‘That won’t work, sir. He knows too much about me; he hears my confession.’

‘How is it,’ I asked, ‘that you are in the R.A.M.C.? You used to be in the infantry—Irish Fusiliers, wasn’t it?’

‘Yes, sir; but you see I went on the Reserve, and once when I was out of work—and it’s wonderful how often I am out of work—I heard tell that they were offering a bonus to reservists of my class to qualify as stretcher-bearers. It meant camp for a period of training, full pay and rations, and a bonus at the end. I was on it at once, and so now I’m R.A.M.C., and won’t have to carry a pack or a rifle in this blooming war. That reminds me, sir. I’m in a bit of a fix; perhaps you can tell me what to do. You know I

ought never to have left the Colours; I'm only fit for a soldier; but you know what it is. When you've done seven years, it's the boot you get. They say they want a big reserve, but it's to avoid paying a pension that they're really after.

'Well, as I was saying, I'm often out of work, and a pal of mine put me on to a good thing. In Ireland the Militia, or Special Reserve, as they call it now, doesn't all train at the same time, and if you pick your regiment carefully, change your name, and keep it dark that you're a reservist, you can keep soldiering most of the year—all that part of it, at any rate, when you want to work. So I'm Private Murphy of the R.A.M.C., Private Donovan of the Munster Fusiliers, and Private Kelly of the Connaught Rangers. That's all right as long as there's no war, for you get a tanner a day for being on the Reserve, and full pay and rations whilst you're embodied in the Special Reserve. But this here war has fair put the hat on things. I've had three sets of mobilization papers sent to me. Private Murphy has joined up all correct, but Privates Donovan and Kelly are posted as deserters, and when caught will be shot at dawn. Fancy being shot at dawn twice over—it ain't nice to think about, is it now, sir? And all because I was so fond of soldiering that I couldn't keep away from it!'

I advised him that the best thing to do was to make a clean breast of the whole matter, and as it was war-time he would probably be forgiven.

When next we met he said, 'It was the right tip

you gave me, sir, and I owe you two lives. Privates Donovan and Kelly won't be forgetting it.'

My next memory of Spud was on board the trooper in Kingstown Harbour. Many of the women had come to see the last of their men, including Mrs. Spud. It was a time of unrestrained emotion and hysterical tears. Murphy had lost his impish grin, and was looking more miserable than I had ever seen him.

'They oughtn't to let 'em come aboard,' he confided to me. 'Spoils the morale of the troops. Look at my Biddy; she'd be more cheerful at a wake—nice sort of send-off for a man.'

Then, as the bugler of the Ambulance passed, his face suddenly brightened.

'Faith, that's the very thing. Tim, cut off and get your wind-jammer, and give us a real Irish jig.'

In a few minutes the sound of the concertina had drawn the crowd. Spud seized his wife and began to dance. Soon the whole deck was occupied by dancing couples, tears and hysterics were forgotten, everybody was in the highest spirits, and I heard one portly matron, who only a few minutes before had been weeping copiously, say as she collapsed breathless on to a pile of baggage, 'I haven't had a beano like this since my sister Bridget was married five years come Christmas.'

As the boat moved off some of them still danced upon the quay, and as long as we were within hailing distance witticisms passed between the troops and the shore.

When we arrived at Le Havre we learned that events had moved quickly. Fighting had already started, and we were urgently needed in Belgium. Within a few hours of disembarking we were in the train en route for Valenciennes. Twenty hours in a troop train—and an improvised one at that! Spud, however, contrived to do himself well. His impish grin went straight to the hearts of the French people. Whenever the train stopped he was out on the platform, a circle of admiring women and girls around him. He knew no French, but he contrived to tell them that he came from Ireland, and his needs were great. When the train moved off he would scramble back into his truck laden with fruit, bread, chocolate, and any other thing that he had happened to desire.

‘This is what you might call a good war,’ he said to me. ‘None of your everlasting veldt, with never a soul to cheer you on your way, like as it was in South Africa. Will the French language be difficult to learn, sir? For I’m thinking a smart lad with a tongue on him might get on very well in this country if he knew the lingo.’

At Valenciennes our stay was brief. We had no sooner detrained than we were on the road marching for the frontier. A twenty miles’ march almost without a halt—and Spud gleaned by the way, refusing no gift that an enthusiastic population thrust upon him. At midnight we reached Bavai, where we had a four hours’ halt. Hearing there was a hospital in the little town, I went in search of it. After much fruitless searching I met Spud.

'Would it be the hospital you're seeking, sir? I was just coming for you, as I thought you'd be wanting it.'

'How did you know where it was?' I asked.

'I didn't, sir, but I asked for the Convent. I reckoned that the good sisters would be pleased to meet a lad from Ireland, and him a true Catholic. That's where the hospital is; they're running it, and they've got one or two of our wounded chaps there, as well as some French and Belgians.'

When I reached the hospital I found Spud already accepted as an old friend; the sisters' faces were wreathed in smiles as soon as they saw him; and one hastened forward to tell him that his supper was cooked and waiting for him. I looked at him with a steady and severe eye, but the only effect was a broader grin than ever, and an almost imperceptible wink. As I was leaving a shout came from across the quadrangle:

'Beg pardon, sir. The Mother Superior hopes you'll do her the honour of taking some refreshment, and if you would like a bed there is an empty ward, and the Sister on duty will waken you when the column moves off.' Then in an aside:

'I told her you were not very strong, and that, though a Protestant, you were killing yourself entirely with good works, and a hot supper and a bed to lie on would be a real charity. How did I make her understand? Why, one of the sisters is Irish, and comes from County Galway. She said the sound of my brogue was the sweetest thing she had heard for

ten years past. It's saints they are, giving up all and living in a heathen country like this, and all for the love of the blessed Virgin.'

.

In the strenuous days that followed—fighting round Mons, and then the retreat on Le Cateau—I had no time to concern myself with Spud and his affairs. But occasionally I caught glimpses of him, full of high spirits, untiring, always a joke or a cheery word to fling at a pal as he passed. There is no harder work in the Army than stretcher-bearing, and I could not resist once reminding him of his remark in Phoenix Park about not having to carry a pack or a rifle.

'But it was the true word, sir. It's not the pack or the rifle that can give you a word of thanks for your trouble. But the boys, they're that grateful for any little thing you do, that it fair shames you, it does.'

It was Spud at his best that I saw in those days, and his tenderness in dealing with the wounded was a revelation of a side of his character which I had not before seen.

On the eve of Le Cateau, as I rode down the steep road beyond Cambrai, making my way to where the infantry fought a heavy rearguard action, in order to collect the bearers and guide them to our bivouac, I met Murphy, staggering along the road looking dazed and stupid. I was shocked and angry.

'Murphy, is this a time to drink? What do you mean by it? Where did you get it?'

He looked at me a moment in amazement, and then:

'Drink, is it? No such luck; I wish it was. No, sir, it's an almighty bat on the head, that's what's wrong with me.'

And he sat down by the roadside.

'I was collecting with my squad. Got too far forward, I'll allow, right amongst the Infantry. But I can't leave 'em to lie for them Germans to look after, if it is at all possible to carry 'em out. We got quite a lot; and then a great shell burst right on top of us, and the next thing I knew I was lying on my back looking at the sky, and I wondered what had happened. The firing seemed a long way off, and then I heard men talking a lingo I hadn't heard before, and, turning me head, I saw grey uniforms, and I knew they must be Germans. So I closed my eyes rapid, thinking, "Spud, it's the stone-dead act that you've got to play now." I lay there afraid to breathe almost, when a voice said in as good English as you or I could speak, "Look here, young fellow-my-lad, you'd better sit up and take notice; it's time you rose from the dead." I opened my eyes very slowly, to find a German doctor looking down at me. "Where am I?" I asked, surprised like. "Where?" says he, with a nasty grin. "Did you think it was heaven?" "Well, sir," says I, "so long as my eyes were closed I hoped so; but now I see your uniform I know it's the other place, and I'm disappointed, for I've always been a good Catholic." Laugh! I thought he would have broke something. Then he looks round and sees

nobody was near, and says, "You're Irish. I studied for three years at Trinity College, Dublin, and I like the Irish. Have a drink of this," and he gave me a sip—a big one—out of his flask. "Now pull yourself together and get out of this, or they'll be sending you to Berlin." You bet he didn't have to tell me twice. I says, "May all the saints have you in their keeping, for you're the best German as ever served a Kaiser." Then I legged it for all I was worth, and here I am none the worse except for a head that won't fit my cap.'

My only other memory of Spud during the retreat was towards the end, when the weary troops sometimes got a halt of several hours for sleep. We were bivouacked outside an ancient chateau surrounded by a double moat. The water seemed as ancient as the chateau, and was covered with a thick green slime which looked solid enough to walk upon. As I lay down, wrapped in my greatcoat, I noticed that Spud was on sentry duty in charge of the horse lines.

'Hard luck,' I said; 'you'll lose an hour of sleep.'

'That's all right, sir. I slept most of the afternoon. I got into a supply wagon when nobody was looking, and covered myself up with bags. I only woke up at the end of the march, when the lads unloading the supplies nearly pitched me out head first in mistake for a sack of potatoes. They dropped me in their surprise when I says, "Half a mo', me name's Spud, but you needn't treat me as if I was a sack of 'em.'"'

A few minutes later I was asleep. It seemed as

though my eyes had hardly closed when I was awakened by a great splash a few yards away.

'What's that? A mule?' asked the anxious voice of the sergeant-major.

'No, sir,' came the rich brogue of Murphy, 'it's only an officer.'

'Is that all?' and the relieved voice trailed off once again into sleep.

During the Battle of the Marne Spud and I were close comrades, and for days worked side by side. A volume might be written of his doings and sayings. I only wish that I had the power to bring you to know him and see him as I did—his self-forgetful gallantry, his tender heart, the unfailing cheerfulness which nothing could suppress, and the resource and ingenuity which never failed him. During those days I realized his greatness as never before, and was proud to know him my friend. One day I remember in particular, when the British Infantry stormed the hills above Pisseloup and Montreuil, and our casualties were the heaviest we had yet seen. Spud seemed to be ubiquitous. Wherever the need was greatest he was there, and seemed to arrive there by magic. No danger daunted him, and whenever the call, 'Stretcher-bearers,' passed from mouth to mouth down the hill, he and his squad were on their feet and climbing the steep slope almost before the words reached them, though often it meant facing a perfect hurricane of fire.

'What's it like in the wood up there now?' I asked him once as he passed down the hill with his load.

'Hell, just Hell! The infantry are lying on their faces pretending to be twigs, and praying that the birds will come and cover them up the same as they did the babes in the wood.'

Later came a demand for every bearer we had got, and we started to mount that deadly slope, only to meet, half way up the hill, the infantry coming back in confusion and panic. The unarmed bearers wavered—panic is infectious—and for a moment I feared they would break, and small blame to them if they had, for it seemed like going to certain death to face that from which armed men fled in panic.

'Come on, Spud,' I shouted. 'Show them the way.'

'I'm with you, sir,' was the response; 'but I should be happier this day if I had a good blackthorn in me fist.'

And the bearers of 14 Field Ambulance went laughing up the hill.

Even as we reached the wood the infantry passed through us, having been rallied by their officers almost as soon as they broke.

'Good luck to you, me lads!' shouted Murphy, as they passed. Then to me: 'I once ran like a hare myself in South Africa, and it takes a good man to stop when once you start that game. They've grit, every one of 'em, and when all's said, they're but boys when compared to the like of us.'

A little later, as we crouched in a ditch to allow a storm of machine-gun fire to spend itself, he said:

'It's a great war entirely. We've hardly been three weeks in the country, and it's a bellyful of fighting

we've had already. But it's all right, that's all right of us is going to be done in the end. We'll get these Germans beat. Well it's a good thing for me, and my name is Spud and I'm a soldier, and I know that a spud must be planted in the ground to be a good one. But the fire has hit, so we'd better get out more before the bullet comes along that's going to land on it. I wonder what my Biddy is doing this day away over there in old Ireland.

Then, with his face lighted by the thought of the woman he loved, he passed again into the wood where death whispered amongst the trunks and roared over the tops of the trees.

In the following days of pursuit until once again the Germans made a stand on the banks of the Aisne, I saw little or nothing of him. He was one of a party left behind in a house full of wounded, with instructions to secure local transport and get the patients with as little delay as possible to the nearest rail-head. That done, they were to catch up the column as best they might.

The first intimation I received of Spud's return was characteristic. In the early morning I was riding across country, making for a unit which had sent asking me to come to conduct a funeral. Half-way there I was startled to see coming along the road a party of German infantry. Lying low in the saddle, I was about to put spurs to my horse and ride for dear life, when a man at the head of the party waved and shouted in what appeared to be a friendly manner. Using my field-glasses, I found this man was in khaki,

and his figure seemed familiar. Slowly and doubtfully I rode towards them, to find that the man at their head was Spud. Grinning broadly, quite unarmed, calmly smoking his pipe, he marched at the head of a party of fully-armed Germans.

'The top of the morning to you, sir,' he said, saluting. 'It's promoted I've been. Company Commander in the German Army, that's what I am.'

'What does it mean?' I asked.

'Prisoners, sir. Did it all on my own, too. I'm thinking it isn't half a bad bag, and all before breakfast. You see, I got up early and went foraging in the woods. You never know your luck. Quite likely you might get a pheasant or a few eggs, and sometimes it has been a fowl or two that's come my way. I hadn't gone far when this bloke—sort of sergeant-major, isn't he, sir?—bobbed up sudden, like, and says, "Don't shoot." I promised I wouldn't, which promise wasn't hard to keep, seeing as I'd nothing to shoot with. Then he says, "Me and my men, we've got cut off, and can't get back to our regiment. For two days we have been hiding in the woods, and we're starving, miserable, and wet to the skin. We want to give ourselves up." "That's all right," says I, "but first it's a question or two I'll be putting to you. What I want to know is how a foreigner like you speaks such good English? How am I to know that it's not a spy that you are? And where are your pals, anyway?" "Yes," he says, "I speak the good English. Before the war I kept a barber's shop in London, in the Borough it was. And I just wish I was there now."

"You'd soon wish you were!" I told him. "They're lynching the likes of you in the Borough just now. It's safer here than there by a long chalk. But where are your pals?" "The whole lot," he said, "but will come if I call." "Then call me bold fellow," says I. Before I knew what had happened they were all around me, jabbering German, like a lot of hungry turkey-cocks, and I began to feel sorry I'd spoke. Then they wanted to give me their arms and ammunition, but I wasn't having any of that. "Saints alive!" I says, "what do you take me for? A blooming baggage mule? Carry your own kit, you blighters. An Irish gentleman doesn't carry for the likes of you." So the sergeant-major makes them form up, and I inspected 'em just like a General (thought I mightn't get another chance like that, so I took it), and then I says, "Quick march; follow me, and anybody who falls out will lose the breakfast which ain't waiting for him at Brigade Head Quarters." Will you take 'em over now, sir?"

"No," I replied. "You do it so well, you'd better carry on until you find the Provost-Marshal."

"Very good, sir. I wonder if he'll give me a tot of rum by way of reward? Sure it would be more for me good, on a wet morning like this, than any D.C.M.," and he went grinning on his way.

We next met when grim work was toward. The British were attempting to force the passage of the Aisne, and the enemy were putting up a desperate resistance. The fight at the bridgehead was close and

fierce, and casualties were heavy on both sides. Spud was in temporary command of a stretcher squad. He worked tirelessly, and seemed to have a charmed life. At last the enemy were driven back, and retreated, blowing up the bridge as they went. The engineers galloped up with rafts and the infantry followed, almost without a pause, close on the heels of the Germans. Spud and his party got across on one of the first rafts, and managed to maintain touch with the infantry as they fought their way across the plain to the foothills, where the Germans once again came to a stand. Later, when the Royal Engineers were building their pontoon bridge under heavy shell-fire, Spud attached himself to them, displaying his usual fearlessness in succouring the wounded. Twice he dived into the rushing river to save sappers who had dropped, wounded, from the bridge, and for this he was mentioned in dispatches.

At the close of the Battle of the Aisne, Spud left the ambulance. He had been promoted and attached to an infantry battalion as medical corporal. During the months that followed—months of horror, agony, and strain to breaking-point—a waking nightmare—I was constantly meeting Spud, but I retain no outstanding memories. Dimly he moves through blurred pictures of burials at dead of night, and regimental aid-posts in tumble-down barns or squalid dug-outs. I see his rugged kindly face, and his irresistible grin, glimpsed by the light of a guttering candle or the red glow of a charcoal brazier. I hear his rich brogue in the din of bursting shell or rattling machine-gun fire, speaking

cheerly words as with a suddenness that surprised them, the enemy's trenches had been abandoned and work

Only one prisoner had been taken up in my memory, a scene near the Irish line of 1917. Later the village was recovered and I had felt at that time we held it for the rest of the war, which afterwards became the Battle of the Somme. I had dug behind us. It could only be seen in the gloom of darkness, but on this night the enemy's attack was in force, and it was almost as light as day—flames, haystacks, and villages in flames. Very bright, bursting shell, and flares lighting up the country with a glare that made one think of infernal fires. The noise of battle was terrific—one of the most intimidating things I had ever heard. When I reached the regimental aid-post for which I was bound, I was greeted by Spud."

'I'm glad it's yourself that's come, sir. We've some lads to bury, and there are so few men left in the line that none can be spared to carry bodies back. So I've dug the grave myself, such as it is. I don't like to think of them lying out there unburied. Their mothers wouldn't like it, sir.'

'It sounds as though you want me to conduct a funeral service in "no man's land,"' said I.

'That's about the size of it, sir. And sure, what better burial could they have than both sides firing volleys over them all day and all night?'

'Yes, I quite see the poetry of it, from that point of view, Spud. But one of these days you will be getting me killed. It is becoming a little habit of

yours to save up these pleasant little jobs for me. I believe you sit down and try to devise some new scheme for destroying my nerve or getting me killed.'

'Ah, no, sir! It's yourself will live through this war, and the bullet's not made that has your name on it. The second sight is mine, and I know. But for myself, this is my last campaign, though my time has not come just yet; and I'm not minding when it does come—it's a good way of dying, anyhow.'

Stealthily we crept to the place where Spud had dug the shallow grave—how he had done it and lived I know not. We dared show no light, for the enemy were only two hundred yards away, and the service was recited in low tones, for we feared some enemy patrol might hear us. When the grave had been filled in, Spud said:

'I'm going to see some friends, if you don't mind waiting, sir. Or perhaps you'll come?'

In a few minutes we were stumbling among the ruins of a cottage, while I wondered who Spud's friends could be, and how they came to be in 'no man's land.' We groped our way down the broken steps to the cellar, and in response to Spud's knock the door was opened by a woman, not more than thirty years of age, with four small children clinging to her skirts. Spud greeted her pleasantly, and began producing from pockets and haversack bully beef, biscuits, jam, and cheese.

'It's clean against all regulations supplying civilians with Government rations,' he remarked; 'but what are you to do? She and the kids would starve if I

didn't bring her something now and again. Besides, it's herself has the kind heart. Many's the wounded man she's fetched in from "no man's land," and cared for him until we could come and get him. Why, when we first found her here, three weeks ago it was six of our wounded and four dead she had in her cellar—and those you've just buried were brought in by her.'

'But, Spud,' I exclaimed, 'she can't stay here. Living as she is between two fires, it's nothing less than a miracle that she and her children are still alive.'

'And that's God's truth. But she won't budge. The Colonel himself came out to see her one night last week. The General has sent her a message. But no, she says that she has lost all; her husband is dead, her farm is destroyed; these cellars are all that she has left, and it would be better for her and her children to die than to leave the land to which they belong. Nothing short of force will move her, and we can't use force, even if we wished, for the Bosch are only 150 yards from here, and any sort of a shindy would draw their fire and hasten the end. If you can persuade her, sir, it's the saints of heaven that'll reward you.'

I soon found that it was fruitless. The poor soul had been devastated by sorrow and calamity. To look into her eyes was a pain. Monotonously she repeated, 'Here we belong, and here we must die. May the blessed Mother of God send the end soon'—a prayer which was answered that night, for at dawn, as we looked out over 'no man's land,' even the ruins of the

cottage had vanished, and from the hole that had been the cellars there rose the lazy smoke wreaths of a smouldering fire.

Spud Murphy, gallant and chivalrous gentleman that he was, crawled out to see if anything remained to be done—a slow progress from shell-hole to shell-hole, playing with death every inch of the way—but he returned empty-handed.

‘It was a big crump did it, sir. And there isn’t anybody left to bury. God rest her soul, she is one of the saints in glory, and her children with her. It’s better so.’

A few nights later the order came for us to fall back upon the line which had now been completed, and which remained the front line of the Bethune sector until the end of the war. It was a night of wild fighting and some confusion. As dug-outs and trenches were evacuated they were blown up and destroyed. The enemy were restless and uneasy—sensing a movement and not knowing whether it was a retreat or an attack. They put down a very heavy artillery barrage, launched an attack in force, and our losses were terrible. By dawn we were in our new position—better trenches than we had ever before seen—and our weary men congratulated themselves that they had at last been extricated from the utterly untenable position which we had been compelled to hold whilst the new line was being constructed.

Soon after dawn I heard that Spud had been taken prisoner. When his battalion got back and the roll

was called. It was found that the doctor had all who were in the room taken to the nearest trench. It was surmised that the order to 'go next to trench' them implied the necessity of being shot. That evening, as we sat round the fire in the dug-out, dressed in our own coats, still listening for a further voice

'For the love of heaven, give me a tank of tea. It's a whole dayful that I could be drinking. I've a thirst on me like the Sahara desert. It's like that I've given them dirty Germans the clean pair of heels. It's a great adventure that I've been having.'

And there stepped into the light a mud-plastered and exhausted Spud, his face still illuminated, in spite of its dirt, by his inextinguishable grin. After we had given him food and drink we got his story. Would that I had the skill to give it in his own inimitable way.

'It's left behind we were. We'd finished our collecting of wounded, evacuated them and the sick, when shells began falling around the house where we had the aid-post, and by-and-by one got it, and we had five wounded. So we moved into the cellars, where we made the wounded comfortable, and then all went to sleep, the first chance we'd had for forty-eight hours—so you bet we slept sound. When the battalion retreated we knew nothing about it—perhaps the messenger from head quarters was caught by a shell, or maybe he found most of the house gone, and thought we were gone too. Anyway, there we were sleeping like babes, and never stirred till mid-day, when we

woke up to find the place full of Germans. Lucky for me, I was sleeping near a door leading into a sort of coal-cellar place, where we dumped the spare blankets when we took to the cellars. I crept into it while the German officer was busy talking to the captain, telling him he was a prisoner, and arranging for the removal of the wounded, and such like. His troops were busy, too, looking to see if there was anything to drink, so that they didn't notice me; besides, I was at the dark end of the cellar. You see, the candles had burnt out, and there was only the light from the stairs. I began to think that they would give me the miss in bawlk. The Captain had gone off under escort, the bearers had been sent away with the wounded, likewise under guard, and there only remained the German officer and one man. He looked round, and seemed about to go, when he sees my door, and walks over to have a look in. It would have been all right if he hadn't trodden on my hand—for I was well hidden. But when he did that, I said what I shouldn't, and that gave the show away. "Ah, who have we here?" he says in English. "Are you also wounded, Mr. Tommy, who uses language that is bad?" "No, I ain't," I answers; "I'm sick, I am!" "Oh, sick is it? Sick of life, sick of the war, or what?" "No, just sick. The Doctor says it's smallpox." "What!" he says, letting out a sort of yell, and jumping back very quick, "smallpox!" "Yes, but I don't think it is myself; the doctor, he's young and inexperienced, and don't know." (May God forgive me for saying it, for it is a great doctor the captain is, and knows his job;

none better. "I think it is only supposed to be needles," and I told him as it was to get to the feet. "Stay where you are," he shouted. "don't come any nearer. I've a good mind to shoot you out of here. Smallpox or measles—what does it matter which? You are a public danger. You stay where you are till I can send a doctor to investigate. And if you come up the cellar steps, Fritz here will shoot." Then off he went, having said something to Fritz, who looked very scared, and followed him up the stairs as fast as he could, and remained on guard outside. I calculated that nobody would bother about me for an hour or two: their doctors had plenty of wounded to get on with—and it would be some time before one could spare time to visit a British prisoner suspected of having smallpox. So I got busy exploring the cellar to see if there was another way out. I found a place where the wall had been broken by a shell, and in half an hour had a hole big enough to crawl out of. But, of course, it was light, and I couldn't go out into a village full of Bosch, dressed as I was. So I sat down to wait, and prayed the blessed Virgin to keep the Bosch doctors busy until after dark. It would be about three o'clock when I got fed up with waiting, and I went to have another look through my hole, and saw what I hadn't noticed before—a dead German in a greatcoat lying only a few yards away. So I got hold of a sort of hook thing that was lying in the cellar, and pulled the body to the hole. When I'd got him through I borrowed his greatcoat, then took off his uniform, and put him to bed as the smallpox patient. When I got outside I

collected his cap, which was lying on the ground, and strolled away casual like. Lots of German soldiers were wandering round the ruins, looking to find things we'd left behind, so I attracted no attention. And you bet I took good care to give nobody the chance of speaking to me. I knew the lie of the land all right, so I made good headway. When I began to get near their front line I kept under cover as much as I could. Twice I had to lie face down in a ditch and play the dead Bosch act, while reliefs passed me on their way to the line. When I got near that estaminet which was our advanced dressing-station I stayed doggo in a ditch and waited for dark. As soon as night came I thought that ended the adventure, so I chucked away my borrowed greatcoat and cap, and legged it for home. But I wasn't through yet, and it was our own people who nearly did me in. Got the jumps they have in the fire-trench. The K.O.Y.L.I. nearly pipped me. Three bullet-holes through my clothes before I made 'em understand that I wasn't the German Army, but only Spud Murphy. So it's back in the Ambulance once more that I am, and I hope you gentleman will ask the Colonel to keep me, for it's with the Ambulance that I belong.'

It was soon after this that Spud got a new pal. A branch of the R.A.M.C. was formed for the sanitary oversight of trenches and billets, and to us was attached a Sanitary Section, commanded by a bespectacled Doctor of Science, who until then had spent his life looking through a microscope. The whole

section was a little better than the rest. One of them trained soldier boys, who were sent to the middle classes and were allowed to play the games. At first the Divisional Surgeon was a little bit but soon came to see that the soldier boys were not one became one of the best. The Divisional Surgeon, for it was discovered that the Divisional Surgeon took him into the most important place. He had no fear. His style in office and correspondence cleared him to us all. We took him to our hearts. He replied to a memo from the General about sanitary reforms, he dealt with the great many proposals one by one, and treated them thus: (1) This is a good idea. (2) Impossible. (3) Nobody will do it. (4) The present method is better. (5) I entirely disagree. (6) I must insist that my work is not interfered with; I am the best judge in these matters. It was felt that a junior captain who could so act was of priceless worth. When the General sent for him and objected to his method of correspondence, he looked mildly through his spectacles and said, 'Very good, sir. It appears that in the army you don't like the truth. You see, I have been accustomed to dealing with men of science.' Whereat the General threw up his hands, and said, 'Have it your own way; do as you like. I don't know what the Army is coming to now it has been swamped with civilians.' The Sanitary Officer came out of Head Quarters with a twinkle in his eye which suggested that he was not as simple as he had appeared.

But if we took delight in the Sanitary Officer, his sergeant we positively loved. A quiet, grey-haired man of refined appearance, obviously a gentleman, he at once attracted attention. Spud gave me the first information concerning him.

‘It’s a new pal I have, sir.’

‘Well, I hope he’s respectable,’ I answered, ‘and will keep you straight when we are in rest billets, for you know that’s your trouble. You are all right when we are in the line, and have even got promoted corporal, and might be sergeant. But as soon as we go back to rest you get adrift, and it’s only because the C.O. won’t see that you’ve not been in serious trouble and been reduced to the ranks.’

‘It’s the true word your speaking, sir, and well I know it. Sure, and Biddy herself, God be with her, is always writing the same to me in her letters. Yes, my new pal’s respectable, right enough. Why, he’s a gentleman born. One of his brothers is a brigadier-general; the other is a colonel in the gunners; and he himself in peace-time is a C. of E. parson. He was curate at St. Margaret’s, Westminster, or some such place, before the war. It’s the sergeant of the Sanitary Squad, sir.’

‘That sounds all right I’ve seen him. He won’t do you any harm. But where did you get this fairy tale about his relations? Did he tell you himself?’

‘Not him, sir. But I got it from the men of the section, and it’s God’s own truth. It’s a great sport he is, him a middle-aged man and all, to come out here. He might have been a chaplain and took things

easy, saving your presence, sir' (this with an impudent grin), 'instead of having to work hard and live as a Tommy. But as I was saying, me and him is pals. He comes to me and says, "You're Spud Murphy, aren't you, corporal—the prize wangler of the Division? Well, I want you to put me wise, as the Yanks say. This sanitary business is a new stunt; nobody wants us, and nobody is going to help us. If we want stores, the sappers say they have none—I've got to make bricks without straw—and you are going to show me how to do it." "Meaning," says I, "teach you how to pinch the straw, or otherwise get hold of the building material and such like with which the Royal Engineers won't part. Right-o, but how about your conscience, you being a parson?" "My conscience is all right. This sanitary business is going to save lots of lives and improve the general health of the troops. We've got to justify our existence. When that has once been done, we shall be able to get whatever we need. Just now we're up against everybody, and the difficulty is to get started."'

Spud's pupil proved most apt, and earned unqualified praise from his instructor.

'Takes to it like a duck to water, sir. He would have made his fortune as a burglar. The R.E. have had to post extra sentries on their dump; then they put barbed wire round it—but the Sanitary Section get all they need for their constructional work.'

A little later the officer in charge of the dump gave orders to his storeman: 'If that Sanitary sergeant fellow comes asking for anything, give him

whatever he wants. If you don't, he'll pinch more in the night. And I can't catch him. • Sentries and barbed wire are useless, and we can't keep builders' stores in a Chubb's safe.'

Spud also was proving an apt pupil. His new pal was exercising a steady influence. Twice we had been back to rest and he had not got into trouble, and the C.O. was heard to say, 'That man Murphy must have got converted. If this keeps on I'll promote him sergeant when the next vacancy occurs.'

One day I was censoring letters for the men when I came upon one from Spud to his wife. As I ran my eye over the pages, looking for the things men were forbidden to write, my own name caught my attention, and I read—'Last night I went to the Protestant service to hear our Padre, Mr. Watkins, preach. He had me set all right, and I got converted. But don't think that means I've turned Protestant. God forbid! I know Mr. Watkins well enough to be sure he wouldn't want that. But it means I'm going to be a better Catholic than ever I've been before, and I've done with the drink.' The days that followed proved that the change was real and abiding.

He was, however, still the irrepressible Spud, with a keen sense of humour. A few yards from the buildings occupied by the head quarters of the Ambulance was a cottage. One day it was struck by a shell, which proved to be a dud, and remained embedded in the wall—the point projecting into the room inside, the base into the street. The Royal Engineers

were out. He was sitting on the floor in the house to let the bomb explode. The bomb was a very dangerous one. It was a very big bomb. It might explode it in the house. It might explode it in the house. On the other hand, you might be killed. It might happen. You never know, and it was wise to take no risk. Meanwhile the boys went to get their appliances for exploding the bomb without danger to the public. Finally, they had the bomb when there arrived on the scene a lad just out from England, who was eager to collect souvenirs. He saw the shell sticking in the wall, and decided to add it to his collection. He worked at it, hammered it, and finally got it free, and then strolled off with it tucked under his arm. It was then that Spud met him.

'Sure, and what's that you are carrying?'

The boy told him.

'Faith! the good God, they say, is kind to fools and children; it's the miracle you weren't blown to ten thousand fragments. I wouldn't walk down the street with that under my arm, no not for a hundred quid.'

The boy looked scared, and was about to throw the thing from him, when Spud almost screamed at him.

'For the love of God, don't pitch it away; hang on to it, man, or we shall both go to Kingdom Come in a cloud of smoke.'

'It was the fright of my life he gave me,' said Spud when describing the incident later.

'Well, then, what am I to do with the thing?' the boy asked.

Then the devil of mischief once again entered into Spud, and he looked the lad seriously in the eye.

'It's the General himself that makes a special study of dud shells. Do you know his Head Quarters in the main square? No? Well, it's the house flying a flag, and a sentry walking outside. Take it there, and if the General isn't at home, say you were told to leave it for him in the hall'

Later, a very irate General regarded a dud shell standing in the entrance hall of his billet, and demanded with heat how it got there. The soldier who brought it was traced, but the R.A.M.C. man who advised him was never discovered—though in the Ambulance everybody had more than a shrewd suspicion as to who was the offender.

One evening Spud came to see me, trying to look sad, but evidently bursting with a good story.

'Well, what now, Spud?'

'I've come to tell you, sir, that I've lost my job.'

'Lost your job? Surely you are not in trouble again? I thought all that was done with, Spud?'

'No, not that, sir. It's the sanitary sergeant. There's nothing more I can teach him. Sure, he's the prize thief of the world, and him a parson. You see, sir, he has just built a new incinerator. It was all complete except the chimney; we couldn't pinch anything anywhere that 'ud do for that. But he's done it. You know the Military Police Post on the main road into the town? Well, the sentry-box is made of galvanized iron, and to-day the sanitary sergeant

pushed the door open, and went in while the sergeant was in the tent. On coming the sergeant's back was turned for a few minutes, and he walked away to the other end of his tent, and when he turned to come back he nearly started at finding nobody in sight, and he fled like a hare. Properly, scared he was. I take off my hat to the sergeant. I can't teach him no more.

The fame of this incinerator spread far and wide. It was a new invention—the best thing of its kind in France, and people came from far and near to see it. It was not only useful, but also a thing of beauty—a work of art. The sanitary sergeant, being a man of scholarship, had even inscribed upon it a motto in Greek characters. This nearly brought him to disaster. The General came to inspect, was much impressed, and his keen eye noticed the Greek inscription.

'What's this? Greek, isn't it? What does it mean? I've forgotten all my Greek.'

The sanitary sergeant seemed deaf, and began showing something else to the General. Later, the General again returned to the motto—tried his A.D.C., but without success; then the G.S.O.3, who in peacetime was a schoolmaster. He went very red in the face, and stammered:

'My Greek's a bit rusty, sir. But a free translation might read, "I live on that which is useless and dangerous."'

'Very suitable,' said the General; 'but not many about who could read it.'

In the confusion of departure the G.S.O.3 took the sergeant on one side.

'I think your Greek motto would be improved if you deleted the last clause. Fortunately, my Greek is rusty, so I only translated the first part. Of course, I know that in Greek there are various readings, but most people might make this motto out to read, "I live on that which is useless and dangerous, and would not disdain even a staff officer."'

When Spud next called to see his pal, the Greek motto was reduced in length; the advice of the G.S.O.3 had been followed. Spud wanted to know the reason why, and when he learned, said:

'I told the Padre there was nothing more I could teach you, and it was the true word that I spoke.'

II

SPUDD MURPHY has left an all too brief memory of the early years of the Great War, and although in the last months I had many good comrades, there was never one who crept into my heart like Spud did. In my recollections of the first dreadful winter - 1914-5 - when the troops endured hardship and privation such as they were never called upon to face again, Spud looms very large. Always cheerful, seeming positively to enjoy it, he made light of the most appalling conditions, communicating something of his own indomitable spirit to his comrades. Said his Colonel, 'That man Murphy is worth more to this unit than can ever be estimated. You could replace me, or any of my officers, but you couldn't replace him.'

In those days the trenches were so bad that the men were standing up to their waists in mud and slime. Such sleep as they got in the front line was taken standing on their feet; to lie down was to be engulfed. When they were relieved they were not strong enough to free themselves from the clinging slime, and we had to pull them out with ropes. There were no dug-outs—no shelter of any sort; neither were there any communication trenches—fighting men could not be spared for the work of construction. The

only possible way to get up reliefs, supplies, and ammunition, and to gather the wounded and the dead, was to do it under the cover of darkness. In daylight nobody could have lived for a moment on that journey—for it would have had to be made in full view of an enemy that was firing at short range. In the night they swept the approaches to our trenches intermittently with machine-gun and rifle fire, hoping to catch us at our task. When a storm of lead swept across the waste we lay on our faces until it was past; then on once more when a lull came. Our casualties were heavy, but not so heavy as to render our work impossible. All through that winter we never slept at night—only snatched sleep at odd hours between our daylight tasks, except when occasionally we were drawn back into some neighbouring town or village for a few days' rest, whilst others took our place in the line.

One such night's work I well remember. We were occupying the line opposite the Messines Ridge. The weather was bitter, and the snow lay almost a foot deep. Our Division was holding a length of line which later in the war would have been held by four Divisions, so there was much ground to cover. Just after dark we started—two medical officers, a dozen ambulance wagons, and a hundred bearers. The journey in front of us was five miles each way, over country where there was nothing but rough cart tracks, and they were hidden under a deep coating of snow, for there had been a heavy fall during the day. Early in the march I found myself by the side of

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For the next three miles we traveled with the
 wagons sometimes pulling, then out of butt some-
 times pushing them up hills, at other times hanging
 on to drag ropes as they slithered down some icy
 slope. Spud was most talkative but I was not very
 responsive, and answered in monosyllables. I was
 feeling the pace, finding the going very heavy, be-
 ginning to wonder if I had the physical strength to
 last out the ten miles. Marching in untrodden snow
 was proving heavier work than I had ever imagined it
 could be.

'I hope you're not minding me chattering away like
 this?' said Spud at last. 'But the fact is, if I stop
 talking, it's asleep I should be. I was out all last
 night, and somehow or other I haven't managed to get
 any sleep during the day. Things kept turning up
 that had to be done, and now my eyes are that heavy
 that, faith, I shall have to be propping up the lids
 with matches soon, or they'll be closed in spite of me.'

After three miles which, to me at any rate, seemed
 endless, we halted by the smoking ruins of some

cottages Here there had been a dressing-station, and we had expected to find a regimental surgeon with the wounded from his regiment ready to be loaded into our wagons.

'Looks as though they have all gone west,' said Spud 'Pity, too, for he was a fine lad, that young doctor Came from Trinity College, Dublin, and many's the talk I've had with him about Dublin and the like 'Tisn't so very long since this happened, perhaps we may find some of them still alive'

As he said it a figure emerged from the ruins—it was the young doctor in question

'Rotten time I've been having. They simply shelled us to blazes, but the cellars are left, and we managed to get all the wounded down below before the whole place was brought about our ears. Only two got killed. What? When did it happen? Oh, about an hour ago. I'm afraid you won't get your wagons beyond this to-night. There is a shell-hole as big as a house where the culvert was—a real big crump it was. Sounded like the end of the world The culvert is non-est; the stream has filled the hole, and now it's a fair-sized duck-pond. You can't go round it, for on each side of the track is marsh, and if you attempt it your wagons will be bogged.'

The bearers groaned. Spud muttered:

'That means a two miles' "carry" in heavy snow.' And I, who had found walking without any load try my endurance to the uttermost, wondered how men could carry stretchers with their helpless, heavy loads under such conditions.

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Now we marched in silence, no talking permitted at all. We were right out in the open, no shelter of any kind, and during the next two miles we were never more than five hundred yards from the enemy, and sometimes were only two hundred yards from them. Our course was almost parallel with the front line. In the moonlight, with the snow for background, we stood out conspicuously, and as we stepped into the open the enemy's fire met us, and we dropped on our faces in the snow. Then a cloud passed over the face of the moon, and we stumbled on in the darkness. Again we halted, this time at an aid-post with a regimental surgeon and the wounded he had gathered. Some of our bearers retraced their steps, bearing the wounded to the waiting wagons, and were ordered to return and wait at this point so as to act as a relay to

the other bearers coming back. Again whilst the wounded were being attended to I buried the dead and comforted the dying. Then on for another mile, and the end of our journey was reached—we had accomplished it with the loss of only two bearers.

‘It’s the good luck that we’ve had,’ so Spud put it. ‘Sure, it was the Blessed Virgin herself that cast the train of her robe over the moon to give us the darkness that we needed.’

Here were gathered wounded brought by the regimental bearers from units farther along the line, and some of our bearers had to make two journeys back to the wagons before all had been cleared. For a while my work was with the sorely wounded and the dying, and I was kept busy helping the doctors and the bearers. But at last I was free to bury the dead. Then I discovered that the grave had not been dug.

‘I’m sorry, Padre,’ the officer commanding said, ‘but I couldn’t send men to dig in the moonlight: they would all have been killed. We are very near the enemy here; at one point our two lines are only fifty yards apart. The cemetery is in full view, and only a hundred yards from the Bosch parapet. Now it is dark, however, I’ll get the pioneers to work—there are twelve men waiting burial.’

Long before the pioneers had finished their work the Ambulance people were ready to return

‘What about you, Padre?’ said the doctor. ‘I mustn’t wait. If I don’t get these wounded in soon, they’ll be frozen stiff. I’ll leave a couple of bearers with you to keep you company.’

'No,' I replied. 'I know my own back, and you needn't be afraid of it. I don't know when I shall be able to get it out, but I shall try for one night.'

I was a little bit afraid that the time was really too late, but I thought I might have done something for the wounded men, the process of which I had not tried. I said, 'But it is too late, sir, for it is wonderful how the voice will carry on a night like this.'

Before leaving I asked for the particulars of the men I had buried, so that their people might be communicated with.

'I've got it all written down for our twelve,' said the sergeant, 'but the thirteenth wasn't one of ours; he belonged to your ambulance.'

'One of our bearers!' I exclaimed. 'When was he hit? I didn't know we had lost one whilst we were here.'

'No, more did I, sir, but it's quite likely—it's happening all the time. . . . No, don't use your electric torch,' as I took it from my haversack. 'If you do we shall all join 'em in the grave. When you get back to the ambulance you will easily find out who he is, for somebody must have laid him down amongst the others; besides, you'll soon know who's missing.'

Now I started on my return journey, and until I was alone I did not realize how tired I was. The grey of dawn was beginning to show in the sky, so I must hurry. Unless the next two miles were covered before daylight my chances of getting through alive were

very slight. As it was, a sniper could evidently see me, for every now and then a bullet went singing by, and to my strained nerves they seemed uncomfortably near. Then the loneliness of my position began to oppress me. I remembered that if one of those singing bullets got me, even if I was only wounded, there was no hope for me. I should drop on the track, and no human foot would pass that way again until after dark, and I should be frozen to death long before they came. My nerves were going to pieces; my imagination was out of hand and running riot—I was badly rattled. Then, as I struggled on, that phase passed, and I was dropping asleep as I walked. I found myself saying, 'You must keep going. You must not let yourself sleep.'

'Glory be, if it isn't Mr. Watkins,' came a cheery voice, and somebody had me by the arm. In a few moments I was thoroughly awake and had myself in hand once more.

I found my companion was Spud.

'Where have you come from?' I said.

'It's back from the grave I've come. It's little I thought that I should ever live to have a Protestant funeral. I'm the thirteenth that you buried back yonder, and they say thirteen isn't a lucky number! It's thankful I am that I wasn't number twelve.'

I gazed at him, thinking he had gone out of his mind. Then came the explanation.

'You see, sir, the doctor didn't like the idea of you coming back alone. Kept saying, 'If the Padre gets one on the way back he'll lie there until to-morrow

night, for we are the last to pass this way to-night. I was a fool to let him stay without anybody." "Well, sir," I says to him, "let me go back: I should like to." Then he up and says, "I wish you would, for the Padre's not half a bad old bird, and I should be sorry for anything to happen to him." So back I goes. And when I got back I found the grave wasn't finished. So, thinks I to myself, I'll have that sleep I'm so much needing; but I'll lie down by the grave, then when Mr. Watkins begins to read the service I'll wake up. So I pinched a blanket and made myself comfortable. But I seem to have slept sounder than I ever did in my life before. From what I can make out they thought I was a dead 'un, and so put me in the grave amongst the rest, and you buried me—or anyways, read the service over me. Well, there I lay, and the pioneer party went off and had some supper before filling in the grave. When they came back, the very first shovelful they chucked in the grave got me, and so, of course, I sat up sudden, and asked, "What did you do that for? Can't you let a fellow sleep peaceable, and him so long without sleep?" Well, them pioneers let out a yell, and ran as I bet they've never run before—I should think that yell must have scared the Bosch, for they never fired. So I got out of the grave and went to ask for an explanation. Then I cut after you, and seems to me I've just about found you when you were beginning to need me.

A little later the doctor at the regimental aid-post was refreshing us with hot tea and soup, and then in

good heart and with renewed strength, we faced the three miles which still separated us from home.

'Well, I'm one up on funerals anyway,' remarked Spud, as we separated. 'It isn't everybody who has one Christian burial in hand. I'll go and ask Father Morgan if a fellow who's been buried a Wesleyan is still a Catholic, and if he isn't, what is he?'

Father Morgan's answer was, 'He remains what he was before, namely, the most incorrigible rascal in the Ambulance.'

On just such another night, I remember walking back with Spud, who as usual talked incessantly.

'I was saying only to-day, sir, that the wonder is that you don't get shot by our own sentries. It's all right when you're with a party, and wagons, and what not. They make a row, and the sentry knows you're coming. But one man alone, and walking on the snow, too, he can't be heard until he's almost a-top of the sentry, and with their nerves that jumpy, they're just as likely to shoot first and challenge after. A man on a lonely post in the dark isn't going to take chances.'

I acknowledged that it was a danger of which I was only too conscious—once already I had been shot at, and under the circumstances could hardly blame the sentry.

Almost as I said it, there was a challenge.

'Halt! Who are you?'

'Friends,' I replied.

'Advance one, and give the countersign.'

Leaving Spud smiling, he could have been halted, I imagined and . . . The sentry didn't seem satisfied.

'Why are there two of 'em?'

I explained that I was a chaplain returning from the line, and that my companion was a bearer.

'Yes, I was told by the Artillery when they passed that a chaplain would be coming along later, and I mustn't shoot. But they said nothing about no bearer.'

Then, as Spud made as though to join me, the sentry snapped out.

'Stand still, or I'll shoot. I ain't going to 'ave two on yer attacking of me unawares. 'Ow am I to know that you're not Bosch spies? What's to prevent yer from 'aving caught and overpowered the chaplain and then put on his kit? When I come to think on it, yer don't look like a chaplain. You ain't got no dog collar, and I don't like the look of yer face—it isn't what you'd call a religious face. And as for that other bloke, 'e looks as if 'e might 'ave broken out of gaol.'

This was too much for Spud, who at once became eloquent and abusive. The sentry listened to him for a bit, then said:

'Yes, that's Spud all right. Why didn't you say so before? 'Im and me's friends. Come and shake hands, me old Spud, just to show there's no ill-feeling.'

Spud came forward, and then exclaimed:

'Why, it's Barmy Smith, of the King's Regiment. He's only half-baked, and oughtn't to be trusted with

a rifle. I thought you only ran messages and did odd jobs, Barmy.'

The sentry grinned, pride showing on his face.

'Spud, this 'ere war 'as made a man of me. Colonel 'e says we're so short of men, and there's no reason why Private Smith shouldn't do a man's work. He's got sufficient intelligence to shoot anybody he sees coming from the direction of the enemy. And I 'ave, too. I'd 'ave shot you all right if the doctor officer 'adn't told me not to.'

Then, suddenly, with a cunning grin, he pointed to the moon.

'See that searchlight. I've 'ad it marked down for some time. It's the Bosch watching of us. But when I tell the Colonel, he'll soon put it out.'

'Now, then, Barmy,' said Spud, 'don't you go worrying yourself needless. That's only the moon. You behaved very smart the way you held us up just now, so don't go spoiling it, and getting barmy again.'

'That settles it,' replied Barmy. 'You are spies, and you're trying to confuse me on my post. Spies of the worst kind—one disguised as a Padre, and the other as Spud Murphy. There's no dirty trick you Bosch won't do. So I'm going to shoot you both. I give you five minutes to confess your sins and make your peace with God.'

Spud used the five minutes in trying to persuade Barmy that we were not spies, and at last, reluctantly, he consented to let us go on our way. But as soon as we had passed him he repented.

'No,' he said in a loud voice, 'I won't be taken in.

I ... to shoot.
I ... looking

We ... Spud
... us
... keep you
... he

The next ... I ... forgotten
the searchlight ... the ... to look at
the sky

Later I again looked ... he was
looking along the sight of his rifle ... I walked that
long straight stretch of road with cold shivers running
down my spine, and when at last we reached a bend
and were no longer in sight of Barmy, even Spud sat
down suddenly on a heap of stones, and, as he mopped
his face, exclaimed:

'Gave me the scare of me life, that he did'

My first act on getting back was to see 'Barmy's'
Colonel, and secure that he should never again be
turned loose with a rifle in his hand.

It must have been about this time that Spud caught
the spy fever. We were always hearing stories about
spies; some of them were true, but more were the
children of Spud's vivid Celtic imagination. It all
arose in the first instance through Spud actually cap-
turing a spy—a man busily mapping our trenches,
dressed in British uniform, which he didn't know how
to put on properly, and who could hardly speak a word

of English. It didn't sound like the German Intelligence Department as we have been taught to believe in it, and we could only explain the occurrence on the supposition that it was an amateur effort—some German officer who had crept over on his own to glean information. When Spud bragged of his achievement, we suggested that the man was an escaped lunatic out of a German asylum, and nobody who had seen him could help arresting him. But his first effort as a spy-catcher whetted his appetite, and he saw in every man or woman he met on the road a possible disguised German.

One night he came to me full of excitement. The schoolmaster of the village in which we were billeted was sending information to the enemy. He had a wire stretched across his yard, 'which looked like a clothes-line,' and he was so cute that at times he used it as such. Actually it was a wireless receiver. Every night the schoolmaster crept from the house, went to the loft of the outhouse to which the wire was attached, and then you could often hear the tinkle of a bell, and sometimes mysterious voices, though nobody but the schoolmaster was seen to enter the building.

I pooh-poohed the whole story, which made him most indignant.

'Am I the man to make a mistake? Haven't I stood night after night listening and watching, until I was nearly frozen stiff? I was letting you in on a good thing, sir, thinking that it was a sport you were. But I've made a mistake.'

He found, however, two young officers who were intrigued by his story, and that night joined him in his vigil. Everything happened as Spud had described it. The schoolmaster furtively slipped across the yard, and climbed into the loft. Again and again they heard the tinkle of a bell, and last, and most convincing of all, voices, apparently of three different people. Silently they stole up the ladder and got into the loft, which was in darkness. Again the bell and voices. The timbers of the rough floor creaked beneath their weight, but the talkers seemed too engrossed to notice. They crept near; then suddenly switched on an electric torch, covering the plotters with revolvers. But all that the light revealed was a very terrified schoolmaster, by whose side a little kitten with a bell round its neck gambolled.

'Where are the others whose voices we heard?' demanded the spy-catchers.

'But there are no others—I recite, giving expression to the different voices of the characters. It is my recreation.'

And so it proved to be. The good man was famous throughout the district and in great demand at all village entertainments. The chaff which followed on this incident cured Spud of the spy fever.

Another great achievement distinguished Spud during that winter near Messines. One day an enemy aeroplane was hit by our gunners. The whole Division watched with wild excitement, for, though it was

winged, it was not completely smashed, and the pilot was planing down to make a good landing. It almost looked as if he would manage to make a landing in his own lines; then the betting was in favour of no-man's-land; but finally it landed just behind our own front line. As soon as ever it landed the pilot and mechanic sprang from the machine and began to sprint across the field—why, we could not imagine. Probably they themselves did not know, for there wasn't the slightest chance of their escaping.

Then an extraordinary thing happened. The infantry, who had been watching the descent with wild excitement, sprang from their trenches with a shout of 'Tally 'o. Gone away!' and hundreds of men were racing in the open after the two aviators. The fact that the enemy didn't machine-gun them must have been because they were too surprised, or out of consideration for the running aviators. The whole thing happened and was over in about five minutes—and Spud won the race. He collared the German pilot as though he had been playing Rugby football, and then sat upon him. He made good his claim in spite of the clamouring infantry, and it was only when an officer appeared on the scene that he gave up his prize; but even then he wanted to deprive the German officer of his fur coat, that being, he thought, his lawful spoil.

'Do you think I should have run like that if it hadn't been the coat I was after?'

It was only when he learned that his captive was a Count that he was comforted.

He said to me, "I know that twelve knocked down one of our best men and hit on his chest. But I am glad to see for it's the likes of him that made the war."

The spring of 1915 found the Division in the Ypres Salient and was as the opening episode of the second battle of Ypres. Hill Sixty, which was the enemy's chief observation post, had to be captured, and the Fifth Division was detailed for that duty. It had already been mined by the Royal Engineers, and at a given signal the mines were fired, the infantry attacked, and the hill was ours. Then followed heavy counter-attacks by the enemy. Foot by foot we were driven back by sheer weight of overwhelming numbers. The German trenches we had captured were lost, and we were now occupying the craters caused by the exploding of the Engineers' mines in funnel-shaped holes, some thirty feet deep. The men lined the rim of the craters and were sprayed by machine-gun, shrapnel, and rifle-fire. As they were hit they rolled over into the pit behind them, until these craters became one great writhing mass of wounded and dead. Three days and nights we fought, without sleep, almost without food. The hill was so choked with wounded and dead that at last the fighting men had to appeal for the hill to be cleared, as there was no room to fight—and infantry had to come to the help of the bearers before this could be done. Our bearers worked until they dropped beneath their loads, unconscious with exhaustion.

Through all these dreadful days and nights Spud moved like the spirit of cheerfulness incarnate. He seemed to know no weariness; his spirits never drooped; he put new life into men who thought they had reached the limit of endurance. Once I came into the dressing-station with an urgent request for bearers. A regimental surgeon had some hundreds of wounded to be carried out; all his own bearers were dead; could the Ambulance help him?

'Bearers?' exclaimed the Ambulance doctor. 'Where am I to get bearers from? My men are done to the wide. They have been dropping in their tracks with exhaustion, and I've given them a rest of two hours, and promised that nobody shall take them for any duty during that period.'

'Well,' I replied, 'can I ask for volunteers?'

'Yes, if you like. But, I tell you, Padre, the men are past volunteering; they can hardly stand upon their feet.'

Outside I found the bearers stretched on the ground in a dead sleep. I wakened them, told them my story of the wounded lying in an exposed position, and asking for volunteers, at the same time saying that nobody would blame them if they didn't volunteer.

Spud looked at me thoughtfully; then said:

'Coming yourself, sir?'

'Of course,' I answered.

No other word was said. Stiffly Spud rose to his feet, and seized hold of a stretcher. Every single bearer followed his example. The wounded were

110 MURPHY

... were themselves
... of mercy
... life and seemed
... in a railway
... end to end
... difficulty
... there was a
... stretcher bearer
... the iron of lead
slept down next to my friend his comrades,
with their heads all crunched in shell-holes and
ditches until it was past time for another rush at
the next pause. Once it appeared that our line had
broken and German infants crept into the cutting.
As we saw the grey-coated stream pouring upon us
we thought, 'This is the end.' Then to our surprise
they came towards us holding up their hands in token
of surrender. They were all armed, and we, of course,
had no arms—but that didn't trouble Spud.
He made them form fours, and marched them
off, until, meeting a fighting man, he greeted him
with:

'Here you are, Bill. I'll make you a present of this
little lot. I must get back to my own job.'

During the second night I was working in the
craters, and as I rose from the side of a dying boy,
I found Spud by my side.

'I've brought you your "British warm," sir, for it's
cruel cold at night, and you mustn't run risks.'

'And what of the risks you have run—you might
have lost your life bringing me this'—I was almost

angry at the folly of it, and yet touched by the thoughtfulness.

‘Oh, that’s nothing, sir, and besides, they want help here from the look of things.’

Hour after hour we laboured in that inferno of suffering and blood. Once, with a queer, twisted smile, Spud looked at me as he straightened his back from his labour and wiped the blood out of his eyes, for he had received a scalp wound.

‘This does you parsons down, sir. You’ll never be able to scare the likes of us again by talking about hell—there is no hell worse than this.’

And I was prepared to agree with him. Very few of those who entered the craters ever came out alive, and of those few most were maimed for life.

Three nights and days we fought, and then the remnants of the Division were drawn out and others took our place. When the Ambulance was mustered and numbered, Spud was missing. Some of the men volunteered the information that he was last seen in Number Three crater; probably he had not received the order, and didn’t know we were being relieved. I offered to get word to him, and the Ambulance marched off.

With misgivings that I tried to stifle I passed up the narrow communication trench which connected us with the craters. It was not like Spud to be left behind. He always seemed to know in advance what was happening. In the third crater I found him, dreadfully wounded, a look of death upon his face. As I dropped to his side, he said:

'I knew you would come so I just waited before I went. But I had to try to hear from you. I told her last time I was on leave that it was yourself who would be coming. Then, seeing the concern on my face, she began to ask questions such as I tried to find words to explain.

It all ended so I told you about me. The Man in White has been a thorn in my side and he's comforted me.'

'The Man in White?' I said. 'What do you mean?'

'Haven't you seen Him?' He's been here all day.'

'No, I haven't seen Him' I answered. 'Who is he?'

'I don't know for certain, sir—and there was a strange hush in his voice as he said it—but I think it was the Lord Jesus.'

Then, 'Tell Biddy,' and he had passed to greet Him on the other side.

‘MONKEY’ TREHERNE

FINDING myself in Plymouth with a few hours to spare, I thought I could not better employ my time than in looking up some of my old comrades in the Royal Navy. So I wended my way to the Dockyard, and, after running first one and then another to earth, finally turned into the Warrant Officers’ Mess, and asked a weather-beaten boatswain who was sitting by the fire, if he could tell me where I was likely to find Mr. Treherne.

‘Treherne, sir?’

‘Yes. He’s a gunner, just home from the Mediterranean. I understand he has got a billet in the Steam Reserve.’

‘Ah! The Warrant Officer Treherne. He don’t exist any longer; been promoted to greater glory.’

‘What, dead?’ I gasped.

The boatswain chuckled.

‘No, not as bad as that, sir, though it’s coming for him same as the rest on us. It’s earthly glory he’s got this time—he’s been promoted under the new regulations, and has blossomed into a full-blown brass-bound Lieutenant; Gunner-Lieutenant’s the new-fangled title. He’s a Ward Room Officer now, and ain’t to be found in no Warrant Officers’ Mess.’

‘Well, where shall I find him?’

MURKEY TREHERNE

He told me to tell you that he's away in Malta, but I'll take you to his own cheek and tell you. Ah! so he can visit you in Malta, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll tell you where he is, and if he's there, I'll tell you if you want to see him. What? What? What? Ah! he'll be pleased to see you. I'll tell you, for I've heard him speak of you a lot of the times you had together in Malta. Just take a seat and make yourself comfortable, and I'll be back in a couple of shakes.

In a few minutes he returned.

'It's as I feared said he away, but expected back any time within the next hour. If you can be happy here, I shall be proud to bear you company till he comes. My name is Jack Benson Treherne and we have been chums even since we were boys together in the training ship, but he's left me behind now for good and all. What? My turn coming? Not likely. For one thing, I left it rather late before I took my Warrant, and long before my turn comes for promotion I shall be retired on account of age. Besides, I don't know that I want it; Warrant rank's about Jack Benson's limit; I wasn't cut out for no Ward Room Officer—haven't got the polish same as Treherne, and have grown too long in the tooth to take it on now.

'I did feel a bit as if I wanted it when Treherne was promoted, for I thought I'd lost my pal, and it hurt. But, bless you, putting two gold rings on the

sleeve of his coat hasn't spoiled "Monkey" Treherne—we're just as good pals as ever we were. Of course, in all matters of "service" it's "Yes, sir," and "Certainly, sir," and never forget to salute. But off duty he's the same old "ship" with whom I've been in so many scrapes.

'Still, it strikes you funny when you come to think of it—"Monkey" Treherne a Lieutenant! Why, when he first joined there wasn't a more unlikely candidate afloat. Of course, ever since you've known him he's been a respectable member of society, a pillar of the Church, Class Leader, Local Preacher, and all that sort of thing. But he wasn't always such. When I first knew him he was artful as a bag o' monkeys, and about as hard to manage. My! But the holes he's landed me in times and again—it's a wonder I'm alive to tell about it.'

'Was that why he was called "Monkey"?'

'No, it wasn't; nor was it because of his looks. There ain't much of the monkey about Treherne's appearance—he's as smart a looking chap as you'll find in the fleet. The way he came by his name was like this:

'We were serving together in the Flagship on the China station, both on us being "ordinary seamen" at the time. She was a happy enough ship, excepting that the Admiral hadn't sufficient to do commanding the squadron, but must interfere a bit now and then with the ship's company; and the Owner (the Captain), he'd got a few queer notions of his own, so that between the two on 'em you'd got to cut a dido

MONDAY—TIEHERNE

Quite early in the forenoon, the orders that his ship was to sail for Bombay, Noah's Ark, and what not, were given, and what was to be done was concluded.

The next day, Monday, the 10th, was a day that dignified as a British ship. He looked at him as he walked the quarter-deck, and the remaining of his sins was what we took to be more like. Of course, this caused a lot of bother, and several quite decent chaps got it to trouble them, but it was not. But, by and by, we were all ship-shape, and a vessel to be heard in the ship, and the lower deck clear of all the animals what had been collected at various ports.

'Then Treherne, who hadn't been in a scrape for weeks, must begin. In them days he was a very lonely sort of chap; he had been brought up in an orphan school, and as far as he knew he hadn't a living relation. One day as we were ashore, what should we see but a Chinnee with a finger-whiskered monkey for sale. I don't know what kind of monkey you'd call it, for I never saw another like it before or since; the Chinnee said it had come from Borneo. It was the rummiest little beggar as ever I saw—just like a little old man, with an expression of countenance same as if his heart was breaking, and all finished off with them flaming ginger whiskers. Treherne couldn't get away from it; said it was a pore orphan like hisself, and he was going to buy it and give it a comfortable home along o' him. I reminded him of the Skipper's new rule about pets, but it weren't no use—buy it he

ould, and he smuggled it aboard that night. For a day or two things went all right, and Treherne got that fond of the brute, it was quite pathetic to see them together—called it his little brother, and made no end of fuss over it.

'Then the trouble began; for when it got to feel at home, it started showing off its talents. Its most remarkable gift was that it whistled just like a man. It 'ud sit up on the mess table with its head on one side a-combing its ginger whiskers with its fingers, looking just as if it was going to die of the melancholies, and all the time whistling like a Bo's'n's Mate. Do what we would, we couldn't stop it, so at last Treherne was told pretty plain that he must find some other lodging for his "little brother." After much thinking he decided what to do; he knocked up a comfortable little box, put the monkey in it, and after dark climbed up to the main-top and lashed it just at the coupling of the mast.

'Next morning, after breakfast, the Admiral was walking the quarter-deck, his hands behind his back, thinking on his sins, when all of a sudden he stopped dead—somebody was actually whistling. The impudence of it almost took his breath away. "Who's that whistling?" he shouted. "Bring the man here at once." But they couldn't find no man, and still the whistling went on. At last he said. "It seems to come from the main-top, Mr. Drake," turning to a midshipman; "just go up to the main-top and see who it is." So off the youngster went. But as soon as ever Treherne's "little brother" felt the vibration

by the ratlines, he collected the monkeys.

Once he collected a white monkey, but he was too good to let it go. "Nobody should have a monkey," he reported. But in a few minutes he had another. One time he was sent down and the monkey was over the monkey felt him and he was afraid. This happened several times and it was the Admiral's getting, so dangerous that the boat had to see the monkey, and he brought him down board and all.

"When he opened the lid out hopped the "little brother, and, looking at the Admiral very mournfully, and stroking his finger whisker, he began to whistle like a blooming steam siren. "Upon my word, what an extraordinary creature!" exclaimed the Admiral. "Martin"—calling the Skipper—"Did you ever clap eyes on a beastie like this? I'm hanged if I ever heard of a whistling monkey before. Whose is it?"

"So Treherne had to go on the quarter-deck. "This your monkey?" thundered the Admiral. "Yes, sir." "Don't you know that whistling is forbidden aboard this ship?" "Yes, sir." "Then what do you mean by teaching your monkey to whistle?" "Please, sir, I didn't. It's natural genius—does it all on its own, sir." "Well, you know that all such pets have been forbidden; what do you mean by having the beast on board at all?" "Well, sir," blurted out Treherne, "what was I to do? He's the only relative I have in the world."

"For some seconds there was an awful silence, and

we expected an explosion. But it was so evident that Treherne actually meant it, that, after glaring at him speechless for a moment, the Admiral burst into a roar of laughter, and turning to the Skipper, said, "I suppose he'd better keep his relative; at any rate, until we reach the next port. But I can't say that his family run to good looks." Then to Treherne, "Hark, you, my lad. Take care I don't hear him whistle again, or overboard he goes, and then you'll be the last of your race left in this cruel world." So from that day to this Treherne has been "Monkey" Treherne.

'Still, quite apart from that he deserved the name, if only because of his monkey tricks. He was always up to mischief, and almost every entry I ever had against me has been for some prank or other that "Monkey" led me into. I remember when we were boys aboard the training brig *Merlin*, at Devonport, he came to me one day, saying:

"Jack, have you ever been to an Irish wake?"

"No," says I, "and don't want to."

"Well, you're going to one to-night; I've accepted an invitation for you with a friend o' mine what lives in Stonehouse Lane, Plymouth."

"Then I'm not for it," says I. "Stonehouse Lane ain't no safe place after dark, and I won't go there, not for you nor anybody else."

'But I might as well 'ave saved my breath; he meant going, and I had to go with him. The house he took me to was one of the vilest holes I ever struck in my natural, and the company matched the

place. Up in one corner, with candles stuck all round him, was the corpse, fixed on a sort of inclined plane, so that all on us could get a good view of him; gathered at a table was a number of men and women of the lowest type, smoking, drinking, and playing cards; whilst an old hag that reminded me of a picture of the Witch of Endor, which my grandmother set great store by, and which always used to scare me when I was a kid, seemed to be acting as mistress of the ceremonies.

'The heat and reek of the place almost turned me up, and I should have slung my hook straight off, only that "Monkey," who had got fast hold of me by the arm, lugged me in and introduced me to the company. He was evidently known to 'em all—in them days pretty nigh everybody in the Three Towns, good, bad, and indifferent, knew "Monkey"—and they gave him a warm welcome. Introductions being over, we settled down to make a night of it, and before long they started to play a game which seemed to me to be only fit for kids: the old woman would say a sentence, then each in turn would say it after her; when it had got round, she would say it again, adding a bit more, and so on. Every time you made a mistake you put a penny in a saucer on the table, and when enough money had accumulated we sent out and got more drink. I soon found that I was doing all the paying, being the only one what was making mistakes; this was due partly to my not being used to whisky, and also because I couldn't keep my eyes off the corpse.

'So, after a bit I said I wouldn't play any more.

but would have a smoke. So I laid hold on a pipe that was lying on the table, filled it at a saucer of tobacco in front of me, and began puffing away. But I hadn't more than half-smoked my pipe when I began to sort of feel that the company was getting bad-tempered, but what it was all about I couldn't fathom. Then "Monkey" comes over to me and whispers, quite shirty like, "Spell ho, with that pipe; can't you see that the next chap's a waiting for his turn?" and I found that you was only supposed to take a few draws, then hand it on, and so it went round, women, men, all having a pull in turn.

'After that we had more drinks, and some other kinds of games I couldn't get the hang of, and in consequence had to do all the paying, as before. Then things began to get a bit misty. I sort of remember "Monkey" trying to get me away, but I wouldn't budge; no, not for nobody—said I'd only just begun to feel at home with the corpse; besides, the show wasn't over; I meant to see the last act, when the Witch of Endor would fly off on a broomstick. Then dimly I heard the old woman persuading "Monkey" to go aboard without me, saying that she would see that no harm came to me.

'I suppose I must have fallen asleep after that, for the next thing I knew was waking up feeling stiff and cold. The dawn was just struggling through the dirty window-panes, the guttering candles were throwing long shadows over the ghastly face of the corpse, and I was alone in the room, bar the old hag, who had the contents of my pockets spread out before

MONKEY TELLERNE

He came with her, and with her scraggy old face and her face that made me ill. Then I saw the face of the corpse. I'll swear its eyes were staring at me, crawling horribly the while. I let him put the top on things. I let out a yell that made the old man jump half across the room. I never stopped running till I got a good mile between me and that house. "Monkey" said it was the nerves, and the walking of the corpse was only the shadows thrown by the guttering candle. Perhaps so, but I never went back to see, and I've never been to a wake since. "Monkey" often wanted me to, saying as that one wasn't no class, and that you had to go to two or three before you got into the spirit of the thing sufficient to enjoy it. Which, I'm thinking, is quite likely true.

The first commission afloat that "Monkey" and me did together was on the Pacific station, and "Monkey" made it what you might call an exhilarating experience. The scrapes we got into during them years would fill a book. "Monkey" said things was so bad aboard that we had to make up for it when we got ashore. Certain it is that the grub was that bad we almost had a mutiny. You see, there had been a lot of stores collected on the station for an Expedition to the Antarctic, and after some years, seeing as they wasn't wanted for the Expedition, they was served out to us. Needless to say, they hadn't improved with keeping—they beat all I ever met in the shape of stores. I'd heard tell of weevily biscuit, and in

the old days you expected to have to knock a biscuit on the table, just to shake 'em out before you started eating; but these biscuits were more than weevily, and the salt horse was preserved to match. We was young, with healthy appetites, and none too squeamish—in them days a sailor couldn't be too particular—but them biscuits wasn't possible. Many's the time we've gone the whole day on empty stomachs 'cause we couldn't bring ourselves to it, and when at last we was driven by hunger, we would set the stuff on the table, then turn out all the lights in the mess so as we couldn't see what we was eating. Even then it wasn't easy, for the weevils gritted against your teeth, and the little white wrigglers were soft, same as butter, and had a queer taste.

'I was cook of the mess, and I especially fancied myself at pies. I remember once making a pie for our Sunday dinner. "Monkey" had stolen the fruit from an orchard ashore. When we came to eat it we all thought it had a meaty flavour, but put it down to the dripping what I'd used to make the crust. It was a big pie, and we didn't eat it all at one sitting.

'Just as we was a clearing up and putting things away, a pal o' mine, Ben Davies by name, come below, so I said, "Like a bit o' pie, Ben?" "Don't ask me twice," says Ben, for he knew what a dab hand I was at making pies. So I cut him a great hunk and hands it to him. He'd a large mouth, had Ben, and took a big bite; then suddenly he went pale and bolted on deck, dropping the pie. We couldn't size it up at all, and was quite flummuxed; then somebody

MONKLY TRLH RNL

steps in and put up the pie, look at it and turn pale.

"Good-bye, Jack. Better be sure," he says, "you've poisoned the lot of us. The cat is in the pie, and Ben Davies as well as me, but is led off."

"Then we will all die," says one on us. "I suppose that rat must have got into the pie after I'd made it. For I'd done it over my bit and I put it on the shelf till it was time to take it to the galley to be baked. But there, spite of what folks say, rats aren't poisonous, for none of us died. Ben Davies, though, cut up rough and was huffy about it for days after, which I thought, to say the least of it, was ungrateful, seeing as I meant it kindly."

"It was about this time that the Chilean and Peruvian War broke out, and we was sent to guard British interests. A good deal of our time we spent in port at Callao, but occasionally we got a job which kept it from becoming too monotonous. The most interesting of these that fell to our lot was a little expedition that our ship had all on her own. News had come to us that a British sailing ship, not knowing a war was on, had sailed into a port about a hundred miles south of Callao, and had been promptly seized by the Peruvians, and her captain and crew cast into prison. The British consul did his best, but failed to get them liberated, and meanwhile the weeks were dragging by, and the poor fellows was having a pretty putrid time in gaol; and reports came to us that they were being treated with great cruelty. So at last we were put on the job, and away we went in high fettle

expecting plenty of fun. When we got near the place we met a Peruvian cruiser, cleared for action, all her war paint on—flags stuck all over her.’

‘Flags stuck all over her?’ I queried.

‘Yes, Peruvian flags. Sign she was ready to fight; then if some flags got shot away, there’d be plenty left to show she hadn’t surrendered. She signalled to us that the port was closed and we mustn’t enter. Whereupon we hoisted all the flags we’d got, and kept on steaming. Then she signalled that the port was mined, and if we went on we did it at our own risk. At this our skipper laughed; he didn’t believe in the existence of them mines, and “besides,” said he, “we’re ordered to go in, and in we go, whatever the risk.”

‘My! but that town began to buzz when we steamed in and cast anchor. You could see ’em ashore running about like ants; shutting up the shops and barricading the houses. All our guns were now ranged on the town; the cruiser was fussing up and down outside the harbour, making all kinds of signals to us, but the skipper took no notice of her. The boats were called away to land a party of eighty men commanded by a lieutenant, and we took with us a twelve-pounder gun just to show ’em that we meant business. But when we reached the quay there wasn’t a living soul to be seen, the streets were deserted—it was like a city of the dead. So we marched straight away to the prison, which was also a sort of fort. Here we met our first check. The drawbridge was up and the walls were manned by soldiers. Our officer demanded the sur-

at the British prisoners but the Commandant refused to let them speak English," and the prisoners would come on—though we had the earth which to scale the walls—he made a show of fight.

"All right," says our lieutenant, "if you don't understand English, I expect you understand a twelve-pounder when he talks." So he ordered up the gun, put it as near as ever he could get it to them gates, and we loaded it then stands by waiting for the order to fire. "Now," shouts our officer, "you've got just two minutes to open the gate. If it isn't done by then we'll open it for you." And he stood by with his watch in his hand.

'That fetched the commandant; he came running himself, all out of breath, and threw the gates open, swearing it was all a misunderstanding, and he meant all along to open them only we was so impatient. So in we marches, and asked that the prisoners be produced. First they said there weren't no British prisoners there; then they said that they hadn't got the keys—all sorts of shifts and turns, just to gain time.

'At last our officer lost his wool, placed 'em all under arrest, said he would go and find the prisoners himself, and when he'd got 'em, he'd clap the commandant and his whole blooming staff in irons, and leave 'em in the cells.

'Then the prisoners was produced, and as soon as ever we clapt eyes on 'em an angry growl went up from our ranks which, when our lieutenant heard, he

ing round on us sharp with, "Steady; my lads, steady." It weren't no wonder we was nearly out of d, for you never saw men who looked more haggard, wild, and unkempt—the filth fair hung on 'em, they blinked in the light like owls. The poor old oper of 'em, with hair as white as snow, could dly totter, he was that weak. It says a good deal naval discipline that we didn't then and there g that commandant and his whole bally staff on gates of their own prison.

The lieutenant saw how we was, and if the truth s known, he wasn't no better hisself, for he was te with rage, and you could see from the look in eyes that he was seeing red. Without a word to commandant, who was bowing and scraping, and anting him to give him a chit to show that he had y surrendered his prisoners to superior force, he ed his back on him, and says to us, "I know what 're thinking, my lads; and I'd like nothing better self than to take it out of the swine. But orders orders, and any moment we may have the whole uvian fleet outside the harbour, and then there'll he dickens to pay; so it's quick march and aboard." The men grumbled and cursed, but we did as he l, and down we went to the quay at the double, ying the freed prisoners, seeing as they was too k to double, after the cruel way in which they'd n treated. As soon as we were aboard, it was up hor and away, leaving the cruiser still making silly uals what nobody took any notice on.

Talking it over afterwards on the lower deck, we

made up our minds we'd pay off old scores when we got ashore at Callao, and all things considered, we did pretty well—anyway, we did our best. Lying in harbour as we was, with nothing to do, plenty of leave was given, and we fair painted Callao red. The police in them parts are different from any I've seen anywheres else; all on 'em are mounted on little ponies—leastways, they were when we were there—and each is armed with a lasso—"Vigilantes" they're called, or that's the nearest Jack ever got to it, and was how we always named 'em.

'When they'd see a sailor going a bit wide, they'd canter up, sling their blessed lasso round him, then gallop off, dragging poor "Jack" behind, and land him in the blooming cells for the rest of his leave. British and Americans they seemed to have a special down on, though there was plenty of other nationalities about for 'em to try their skill upon. After our little jaunt down the coast things got pretty hot ashore. I ain't denying that we aggravated 'em considerable, but that wasn't to be surprised at after the way they'd treated that poor skipper and his crew.

'One day, one hundred and eighty men from our ship had "general leave," and as soon as ever we landed we started tapping the rock—that is to say, doing as Moses did when he was thirsty in the wilderness, only we weren't satisfied with water, same as he was. Then came trouble with the Vigilantes, and they ended by rounding up the whole blessed lot of us, and sticking us in the stone-jug.

'When word went aboard to our skipper, that every

man jack of his "general leave men" was in gaol, he was more than a little mad, and come ashore vowing he'd have somebody's life if the men were not released immediately. What he said exactly to the Chief Vigilante I don't know, but at the end of the argument they clapped him in chokey too, and shoved him in along of his men. I never saw a man madder than what he was when they slung him into the middle of us—and the things he said! well, they're best forgot.

'He was to dine with the Admiral that night, and when instead of the captain there came a message telling how he was in chokey along of his "general leave men," why, the old man laughed so much he nearly had apperplexy. His steward told me afterwards that he got quite anxious about him, and thought at one time that he was a gone coon. When he was able to control hisself, he sends for the British Consul, and all on us were liberated. But the skipper was chipped more than a little by his brother officers about his being a gaol-bird, and even when he became an Admiral some years later, it wasn't safe to say "Callao" in his presence.

'Of course, after that, things went from bad to worse ashore. There was considerable rioting, and a marine got killed. Needless to say, "Monkey" was in the thick of everything—a sort of ringleader, in fact—until at last the Vigilantes got him marked down, and by-and-by one on 'em lassoed him. Now you've only to look at "Monkey" even now, to know he ain't no chicken, and actually he's a deal powerfuller even than

he took. When sooner felt the cord a-coiling round him than duck as though hit before the Vigilante had time to recover himself and gallop away he laid hold of the rope with a strong pull and over in the road fell the Vigilante, top horse and all.

Then there a trial to his "Monkey" dives into a grove, snags a rat-tail too, over the garden wall, across the mud, and care- and less of the things he broke with his great feet and took a flying leap through some French windows, landing in a grand dining room where a lot of swells was sitting at dinner.

'Then there was a hullabaloo - the black servant was just bringing in the soup when "Monkey" arrived, and as he saw him coming through the window, with a yell he drops the soup and does a bunk, the tureen coming smack on the bald head of the master of the house, the ladies squealed like stuck pigs, chairs were upset, the things on the table scattered all over the room—the whole happy home was broke up, same as if it was a blooming typhoon had swept through the place.

'And "Monkey," with never a "By your leave" or a "Beg pardon," nips out of the front door, and never stopped running till he'd reached the quay, when he went straight aboard. In the night he woke hisself, and also me, by his laughing in his sleep. "What's the matter, Monkey?" I asked; and he'd say, whiles his hammock swung with his laughing, "I was thinking of the old toff's face, with the soup a-running down over his head into his eyes."

‘MONKEY’ TREHERNE

‘A few days later we fixed it up with ‘ne Yankee sailors to be even with the Vigilantes because of the marine what they’d killed. We formed a sort o’ Anglo-American Alliance, and arranged to meet the Vigilantes when they was coming home for the night. We had discovered that they patrolled the country round, for what purpose we never knew. It was generally thought by “Jack” that they rode out into the country, found a shady tree to lie under, and spent the day on the flat of their backs. But that’s neither here nor there; the thing that mattered was that at sunset they came riding into town in droves, and we resolved to ambush them, and “brown” the lot with pistols. We found waiting rather dry work, so we liquored up considerable, and before that we’d had a tidy wet, cementing the Anglo-American Alliance, so that when at last the Vigilantes did come, we were all on us long past straight shooting. But we let drive, and you never saw such a stampede—every one of them Vigilantes travelled like a Derby winner. So far as I know, none of ‘em was hit, but it was our last chance at ‘em, for the thing came to the Admiral’s ears, and then all our leave was stopped, and the port of Callao ceased to be interesting.

‘It was soon after this that “Monkey” got religion, and then he quitted his “Jimmy the Gong” tricks, and became the sober, respectable character what you got to know in Malta. The way it happened was this: When we were at Vancouver one Sunday evening, I drifted into a Methodist Church, and in the prayer-meeting afterwards I got converted. When I went

snarl. "Seen that woman lately?" "Yes." "Is she still praying, curse her?" "Yes, 'Monkey,' and so am I." He swore a horrible oath, and left me. I was startled, for "Monkey" at his worst had never been a foul-mouthed chap.

'That evening he came to me of his own accord.

"Going ashore, Jack?" "Yes." "Then I'll come with you. I fling up the sponge; this praying business has settled me." So "Monkey," away yonder in Vancouver, gave his heart to God, and began a new and better life. He's left me far behind since then—a local preacher he is, also a class leader; but I thank God that I had something to do with the bringing of him in.

'Well, my lad; what is it?' This to a servant that had just entered the room. 'A message from Lieutenant Treherne, sir. He's just got back, and will the gentleman meet him at the Keyham Gates in a quarter of an hour's time. And if you can come too, sir, he'll be very glad.'

'Right ho! Just a moment, sir, while I shift out of uniform, and then we'll be off. I expect it means an all-night sitting, for when old shipmates meet there's much to be said.'

LEONIDAS THE CHRISTIAN

IN THE DEEDS and Jubilee of Queen Victoria, and the Third Section of the International Force of Occupation, Creta felt that the occasion should be suitably celebrated. Both naval and military forces combined to make the celebration as impressive as possible. Salutes were fired from the big guns of the flag ship, the men-of-war in the Candia road trail were fully 'dressed' with bunting, and a large naval force had been landed to take part with the military in a full-dress review and march past. The latter was witnessed by the European Admirals, the officers of the International Force, the Turkish Governor and his staff, and the delighted inhabitants of Candia.

The day's rejoicings were to be brought to a close in a truly British manner—the officers of the British regiments having invited their comrades of the navy and the International Force to dine with them. The guests were arriving, and we were doing our best to be entertaining in Russian, French, Italian, German, and Turkish, which was difficult in view of the fact that few of us could speak any language but English, and very soon had exhausted our small stock of polite phrases in the language of the guests committed to our charge. All had arrived except the three admirals (Russian, French, and Italian).

'They're all right,' I heard our colonel saying. 'They'll be along directly. You see, I thought it was rather much for the old gentlemen, having been at the review this morning, to walk such a distance before dinner, so they're being driven up from the quay.'

'In what, colonel?' asked a naval officer. 'The only wheeled carriages that I know of in Crete are our commissariat carts. You surely aren't bringing them up in one of those. Hardly dignified enough. Eh, what?'

'No, I'm using commissariat mules to draw them, and at this morning I found an ancient state carriage belonging to the Turkish Governor; hasn't been used for fifty years by the look of it; frightfully rickety, don't you know; still, it ought to hold together for the journey to and from the quay. But here they come!'

And so it seemed. Our camp was on the walls of Candia, the wall just wide enough for a row of tents and a dusty road. Along that road now lurched and reeled the ancient state carriage. A Maltese muleteer stood on the footboard yelling and cracking his whip, his mules at the flog.

'Looks like a ship in a storm,' murmured a naval lieutenant; 'I bet the old boys are feeling pretty seasick.'

But it was worse than that. The Maltese driver, with a final flourish, brought his chariot to a stand in front of the mess, and we crowded forward to greet our distinguished guests. The carriage door

with a horrified gaze three very old, and very poor, old gentlemen in full dress uniforms, all apparently in a condition verging on collapse.

What had happened was this. Early on the journey the turning of the recent vehicle over the rough road surface, so unsteady for wheeled traffic, had caused the bottom of the carriage to fall out. The one of the four admirals were drowned in the rattle and noise of their progress and the yells of the driver. Over something like a mile of dusty road the poor old gentlemen, in their tight-fitting uniforms, had been compelled to run inside their moving prison!

At first, the possible serious consequences of such violent exercise to men no longer young, obscured the ludicrous side of it. But when the admirals had disappeared into the colonel's tent to be refreshed, dusted, and generally set to rights, the comic side of the scene swept us off our feet. It was some considerable time before any of us could summon sufficient self-control to enter the mess tent, and appear before the great men with becoming gravity.

Standing near the mess I had noticed a young Christian chieftain, evidently one of a deputation from the insurgents in the mountains which had that day came in to negotiate with our general, Sir Herbert Chermiside. The mountaineers of Crete are a fine race, but even amongst his comrades this man would have attracted attention by his magnifi-

cent physique and by his noble, intellectual face. He was in the picturesque and serviceable Cretan national dress—long buff-leather boots and loose, blue zouave trousers, a red silk scarf twisted around his waist, a tooled-leather cartridge belt, with a silver-hilted Cretan knife and a revolver stuck in it, a short-cut, embroidered, sleeveless jacket, two bandoliers of cartridges crossed on his breast, white shirt sleeves, on his head a high fez-shaped cap, and in his hand a serviceable modern rifle, the stock of which was curiously ornamented and inlaid. He looked like the brigand of a boy's dream, a hero of wild romance, instead of a modern European.

He had been an interested spectator of all that had happened, and, when the humour of the situation had swept over us, he had leaned against the ramparts, shaken with a curious silent laughter, his great shoulders heaving, whilst tears coursed down his cheeks. As, at last, his laughter subsided, and he wiped his eyes, I heard him say, 'By Jove! It's the funniest thing I've ever seen in my life.'

I gazed at him in astonishment. It was the voice and accent of an English gentleman. He caught my eye, smiled, saluted, and passed on his way down the lines.

Throughout the evening I found my thoughts returning to the young Cretan chieftain who had spoken such good English; wondering who he was, and what his history could be. When I retired to my tent he was still in my thoughts, and I resolved the next day to make inquiries about him. I had

LEONIDAS THE CHRISTIAN

When the door curtain
was drawn, a black servant announced,<
"The gentleman is here."

He entered the room. Cretan of whom I had
learned the name with a smile and out-
stretched hand greeted me.

"My name is Leonidas," he said. "My name is Leonidas
Petrovich, but you may call me Leonidas the
Christian. I don't leave the island very late hour,
but I go to the mountains at dawn, and this
morning I have been here. You have been engaged all
day and I have been waiting for you. I came in with a
deputation to see Sir Herbert Chermade and I have
had to act as spokesman and interpreter for our
people. The reason for my visit to you is that I
promised a mutual friend to look you up if I ever
got the chance. He's an old schoolfellow of yours
—Hughes, of Trinity."

Then, nothing my surprise, he glanced down over
his brigand-like costume with a laugh.

"Doesn't look much like Marlborough and Oxford,
does it? Yet those are the seats of learning that
are responsible for my education."

In the conversation that followed I learned some-
thing of his history. He belonged to one of the
oldest and most influential Christian families in the
island—a race which had always been distinguished
for its patriotism. One tradition of the family
marked it as peculiar; in a country where few even
of the priests had sufficient education to sign their
own names, and where laymen regarded the arts of

war and skill in physical exercises as the only things worthy of a man's consideration, the family of Petropoulaki had always educated its sons.

'My grandfather, my father, and my uncles,' said Leonidas, 'were educated at Athens. As I am the only son left alive of the present generation, it was decided to do better for me, so as a child I was sent to a preparatory school in England. When I was old enough I entered Marlborough, and from there went on to Oxford. Ever since I was nine years old I have lived in England, only visiting Crete once a year in my summer holidays.

'Last year, whilst I was spending "the Long" with my people, the present insurrection broke out, and I did my share, as became a man of my race. In fact, I enjoyed it so much that I was for chucking Oxford, and staying on out here. You know fighting is in my blood; there has never been an insurrection in Crete but a Petropoulaki has been one of the leaders, and my grandfather, Leonidas, after whom I was named, was one of the most conspicuous figures in the rising of 1868. Indeed, I don't believe a single man of my family has died in his bed during the past three hundred years. Besides, I found that I was popular amongst the young men, who were prepared to accept me as their leader, and so I could see a great chance of being useful.

'The family, however, met in council, and decided that I must return to Oxford and take my degree, so I had to go, whether I liked it or not. As soon as ever I was capped, however, I started for

how the whole island is to share in winning Crete back for that, what it means this time Greece is with us, and has sent us arms and men. As for the interior of the island is ours, the Turkish Cretans have been driven into a few coast towns, and now before this we should have driven them into the sea if it had not been for your confounded "European Concert."

'But we mean business this time, and "Powers" or no "Powers," we will yet have every Turk out of the island. We know that England is our friend, and we shall never forget the stand Lord Salisbury made the other day—and that in face of a threat of war from one of the "Great Powers"—when he refused to be a party to blockading Crete, and thus preventing us from obtaining troops and arms from Greece. You remember what he said? Every Cretan knows the words by heart, "Her Majesty's Government shrinks from taking part by material intervention in the work of restoring the authority of the Sultan, when there is no means of ensuring that the restored authority will be exerted with moderation and justice." But if I start on Cretan politics I shall keep you up all night. Already it is long past midnight. I'm delighted to have met you. Hope we shall meet again soon. If ever you feel like testing the hospitality of the mountains let me know. I shall feel it an honour to act as your host. Good-bye.'

And, with a grip of my hand, he was gone.

After this I seemed to be always hearing of

Leonidas, and at rare intervals we met. He was so popular with the Christian youths, and seemed to have such aptitude for mountain fighting, that he speedily became their acknowledged leader. He conceived the romantic idea of equipping, at his own expense, a small body of men who should always bear the brunt of battle and undertake all forlorn hopes. He carried out his plan with great care and sagacity. His little band, 'The Holy Company,' as they were called, in memory of those similar bands which in ancient days, at Thebes and at Carthage, won undying fame, consisted of fifty young men, all of splendid physique, well armed, and well equipped. They performed numberless daring exploits, and became feared and hated by the Turks to such an extent that a price was put on the head of their leader. Leonidas became the popular hero of the insurrection; in a land where poetry is chiefly associated with the risking and taking of life his was the sort of achievement to be made immortal in song, and his name bulks large in all recent Cretan poems.

At the Battle of Malaxa the 'Holy Company' played a great part. The fight took place on the heights above Canea; a Turkish blockhouse was captured, the Turks were driven from their lines, and there is little doubt that Canea itself would have been captured by the Christians had not the 'Powers' intervened, bombarding the insurgents with their heavy guns, and, as Mr. Gladstone declared in the British House of Commons, thus

11 LEONIDAS THE CHRISTIAN

to save the reputation of their dishonour. It was the *Heavenly Cannon*, which carried the blockhouse to pieces. Leonidas, who hoisted upon it the Turkish flag, the sight of which was the signal for the British to open fire upon the little fort. The bombardment lasted ten minutes, but it did not do much. One hundred large projectiles were hurled at the block-house, making it a heap of ruins.

A veteran soldier, who was present told me afterwards that during the bombardment the place was nothing less than an inferno. Yet the two sentries Leonidas had posted at the gates gallantly kept to their posts the whole time, and never attempted to take cover. Inside the fort itself Leonidas calmly smoked and discussed the situation with his Turkish prisoners. Six of these prisoners were killed by a five-inch shell which burst in the room, and the whole party were almost buried alive in the ruins. When the admirals ceased their big gun practice, Leonidas hauled down his flag, set fire to the remains of the block-house, and marched off with his prisoners. Disdaining to go by way of the Christian territory, which meant a much longer march, he calmly took a short cut through the Turkish lines, at one point having to fight his way through, and finally reached the insurgent head quarters with more prisoners than he had men to guard them.

At the Battle of Vamos, Leonidas's gallant little company again gave a good account of itself. The battle was fought on the slope of the hill above the

small town from which the battle takes its name. It was an ideal place for the Cretan method of warfare, the ground being intersected by stone walls, which provided ample cover. In this fight the 'Holy Company' was almost exterminated, and afterwards Leonidas had to seek fresh recruits. At the close of the day, in an irregular, oblong field, about a thousand yards long by one hundred yards wide, in addition to several hundred wounded, there were found dead no less than one hundred Turks and twenty-five Christians; and the Christians were all members of the 'Holy Company.' So close had been the fight that in the end the combatants had fought hand to hand with clubbed rifles and the short Cretan knife.

These and similar exploits made the fame and personal influence of Leonidas so great that, young as he was, when a vacancy, caused by death, occurred on the Epitropi (the Committee of Reform, numbering fifteen members, which controlled the insurrection), he was unanimously elected to fill the post.

To me, his chief glory was that he introduced a new feature into Cretan warfare—the quality of mercy. Hitherto, quarter had never been given or asked. Capturing prisoners—sparing the lives of the vanquished—was repugnant to the instincts of both Christian and Mussulman alike. That Leonidas was able to introduce this innovation into the insurrection of 1898 was a remarkable testimony to his force of character and his personal influence. In all previous risings, those who were taken alive

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very honest and noble character, and foully murdered and robbed.

On the next day Leonidas came to us from Sparta, the place of his confinement in the 'Holy Company.' His first proposal was a cessation of hostilities until they came to the aid of the prisoners, on the ground that he would be judged by the custom of the country to which they were sent, but that he would be judged by the custom of the country to which they were sent. Their deliberations were interrupted by the entrance of Leonidas, who, looking rather shy and awkward, at once went to the point. He had come after consultation with his comrades, to say that the Christian youths were not blind to the beauty of their prisoners, and if the latter would become Christians, they should each be immediately provided with a husband from the 'Holy Company.' He then discreetly retired to give the prisoners an opportunity of discussing his proposals.

On his return he found them unanimous in refusing his offer—they preferred death, and that which was worse than death, to giving up their religion. At once he bowed to them with deep respect, told them that he admired their courage and religious loyalty, assured them that not a hair of their heads should be touched, but that they should be sent under guard to the representatives of the 'Powers' at Candia, who would take steps to restore them to their families. His promise was kept in every particular—a striking contrast to the cruel self-indul-

gence of the Turks and Bashi-Bazouks, whenever they had found themselves in a similar position.

The Christmas I spent in Crete I shall never forget; for sheer discomfort and misery it takes a lot of beating. The whole interior of the island was under snow. For a week a storm had been raging which rendered it impossible for any ship to approach the roadstead of Candia, and our supplies were almost exhausted, so we were on half rations. We shivered on the wind-swept ramparts of the city, our tents were constantly being blown away, while we were drenched to the skin by the driving rain, and wished ourselves anywhere in the world but Crete. We ate our miserable Christmas dinner of bully beef and biscuit almost in silence, and early retired to bed, that being the only place where it was possible to get warm.

The officers' tents were pitched on an abutment of the walls which had once been used as a Turkish cemetery. The tents had, in consequence, been arranged, not in the usual ordered lines, but with a view to avoiding, as far as possible, the grave mounds. It had proved impossible, however, to avoid them entirely, and two grave mounds were actually inside my tent, whilst a third barred the entrance, and was apt to trip up unwary visitors.

As I left the mess to grope my way to my tent, the wind and rain met me full in the face, and stumbling over one of the graves, I went headlong in the mud. Whereupon a voice shouted:

'I say, you fellows. Here's the Padre going

1. HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN

I ate the food of the four. Dined not wisely
but I did not starve. Christmas day, too,
I ate and drank but I was ashamed of myself; and
I was a teetotiller!

And I was helped to my feet by the Orderly
(Obedient, I think in hand), was just returning
from a drink his rounds.

'Now I take you to your tent and, take my
tip old chap, sign the pledge again, and make a
fresh start. It's evident you haven't got the head
to carry liquor. Good-night.'

When I entered my tent I found that I had a
visitor. Leonidas sat with a big cigar between his
lips and a steaming cup of coffee by his side.

'You see, I'm the "man in possession,"' he said.
'Your servant wanted to fetch you from the mess,
but I preferred to wait, for I felt certain you would
not be long. Can you put me up for the night? It's
as much as my life is worth to stay in the city, and
it's certain that I cannot get back to the mountains
to-night.'

'I'm delighted,' I exclaimed. 'I'll just go
and borrow a bed and some blankets from the
hospital, and we'll make you comfortable in no
time.'

'No, you don't,' he protested. 'I am in no need
of a bed. Haven't slept in one for months, and I
shall be quite comfortable wrapped in my sheepskin
coat lying on the ground.'

When, later, I was comfortably tucked into my
own warm bed, my conscience began again to

trouble me at the poor hospitality I was offering my guest, and I urged:

‘Do let me send for a proper bed. I’ve only to give my servant a shout, and the thing is done. It will be no trouble, and I shall feel much happier about you.’

‘You shan’t do anything of the sort,’ he said. ‘Why, it’s the best sleeping-place I have had for weeks. A tent to keep out the rain, a waterproof sheet to lie on, a sheepskin coat to wrap myself in, and, see, the grave of a Turk for a pillow. What better rest could any Cretan patriot desire? That last item alone is sufficient to give me pleasant dreams. Would that every Cretan lad might sleep so pillowed, save that it’s too much honour for the graves of such swine.’

‘Leonidas the *Christian*,’ I murmured. ‘What a nice Christian spirit you betray for one bearing such a name.’

‘That’s right. Sneer away!’ he exclaimed passionately. ‘Make the old accusation that we Christians are no better than the Turks against whom we fight. I’ve heard it all before. But if we are blood-thirsty and unforgiving, who has made us so? If we are cruel and unchristian, remember the school in which we have been reared. I know that we are far short of the English standard, but we are not quite as bad as the Turk. During the last ten revolutions—and that covers a period of a hundred years—there has hardly been a single instance of a Christian being guilty of any crime against Turkish

CHAPTER IV. THE CHRISTIAN

“I have often been asked with regard to the English, ‘What did they do?’ Remember what they did to the Christians when they sacked the Christian Quarter. A great deal was made in the British newspapers of the fact that nine Christian bakers died in their ovens. But they were men; that the Jews and the Armenians was ten thousand times worse.”

“Do you forget the scene we witnessed in this very city of Candia less than three months ago, when our mothers and sisters were outraged, mutilated, and murdered? Ay, and worse—for, after all, they are dead and their sufferings are ended. But think of the Christian maidens who were then carried away, and who, at this very moment are prisoners in the harems of that city below us.”

“Then, have you ever heard of a Christian desecrating a Turkish grave? Yet every Christian cemetery in this district has been desecrated, every grave opened, and the bones of our loved ones scattered wide. But we have never retaliated in kind. We are fierce and brutal. We, at times, are guilty of atrocities which rival the worst committed by the Turks. But is it surprising that we sometimes pay them back in their own coin? Ah! you know nothing of the long reckoning; of the tales of murder, oppression, and intolerable wrong, which for nearly three hundred years have made this fair island a hell. Listen, and I will tell you of my own family history and of my early life, and when you

have heard, you will cease to wonder that I hate a Turk worse than I hate the devil.

‘For nearly three hundred years the Turk has been in possession of Crete, and during that period the Christian population, which once numbered over a million souls, has steadily diminished, until to-day it is less than one hundred and fifty thousand. The story of my family is typical of all Christian families. I could easily give it you from the beginning, for we have long memories in Crete; but suffice it to say that during these centuries of oppression no man of my race has died a natural death, and few have ever lived to old age. Most have died fighting the Turk, many have been murdered, and some have been executed, which is only another name for the same thing. I will not weary you with ancient history; I will only tell of things which I have had from the lips of those who were the principal actors, or which I myself have seen.

‘My grandfather—the Leonidas after whom I am named—was of the few of my blood who lived to a ripe old age—he was nearly eighty when he was killed in battle. He was very fond of me, and in the evenings we would sit together on the terrace outside his house on the mountain side, watching the lights of the Turkish town a thousand feet below us, whilst he taught me to hate the Turk. The story which made the first deep impression upon my mind was of his own early youth, and was the cause of his own undying hatred of the Mussulmans.

"See Leonidas! little lad," he said, pointing in the direction of Hieron. "Mark that great house surrounded by trees on the hill above the town." It was there that my youth died, and hope and love and joy went out of my life. I was a young man, strong, brave and of great agility, and I loved the maiden Kaliope, who by and by was acknowledged to be the most beautiful girl in all the Canean plain. She was fifteen years old, and, therefore, of marriageable age, and her old father, glad that one so fair should have a strong protector, consented to our union. The Mutessant of the district was a man called Mustapha Bey; he was not a good Mussulman, for he was addicted to wine. When sober he was a just and merciful man for a Turk, but when he was drunk, no worse fiend could be found out of hell. He heard that Kaliope was betrothed, and on the morrow of our wedding he sent word to her father that he should bring the maiden to his house—which you see yonder—in order that he might offer his congratulations and bestow a bridal gift.

"The father knew not whether the Bey was drunk or sober, and on that fact depended the safety of his going. Made timorous by the weakness of old age, he dared not refuse, and he went, taking his daughter. When they were brought into the presence of the Bey he was at the feast, and in his cups. His congratulations were of a sort that no modest girl should hear; her blushes heightened her charm and intoxicated the Bey. The old father, vainly

struggling and fighting with the servants, was cast forth.

“And Kaliope? . . . I never saw her again. But she was a brave lass, and had been well brought up. She remembered the words of the old poem, ‘Will you not marry, will you not take a Turk to husband? I would rather see the earth blush with my blood than feel a Turk’s kiss on my eyes.’ They told me afterwards that she snatched the knife from the Bey’s girdle and drove it to the hilt in her heart.

“Meanwhile, the father had come to me with his story, and together we were hastening to the house of the Bey, I beside myself with grief and fear, ready for any rash enterprise. On the road we met the Bey, surrounded by his servants, galloping as though he would flee from the tragedy he had left behind him. Deliberately he put his horse straight at the father of Kaliope and rode him down—the old man fell, bleeding and dead, battered beneath the horse’s hoofs. With the howl of a madman I flung myself upon the cursed Mussulman, pulled him from his horse, and there, in the midst of his frightened servants, strangled him with my naked hands. Before they had recovered from their astonishment and fear I turned and fled to the mountains. Since that day I have lived only for vengeance, and I have reared sons and grandsons only that there might be more brave patriots to help drive the Turks into the sea. And now, little Leonidas, swear that you, too, will live and die waging war against these fiends in human form.”

And now, when I have been put upon me

As a Christian, I have no father, as the father of Melchior, he & more than half my father's soldiers, Husseyn Bey and his soldiers, were at Melchior, & killed the younger branch of the Patriarchate. There were few men left in the village, & they had had a recent rising, & many had been killed in the fighting. Husseyn Bey, now that there was peace, regardless of the general order which the Turkish Governor had proclaimed, came to punish the villagers for their share in the insurrection. The people, numbering about three hundred, most of whom were women and children, fled to their cave with all their portable goods and sufficient provisions for a six months' siege. Husseyn Bey summoned them to surrender, they killed his messenger, casting forth his body from the mouth of the cave. Then he made an assault, with the only result that he lost twenty-four men killed and a great number wounded.

'Again he made a demand for surrender, and offered to spare all their lives, this time sending a Christian woman as messenger. She, like the previous envoy, was shot, and her body cast into the valley below. The Turks now attempted to fill the mouth of the cave with stones, but each night their day's work was undone. At last they gathered brushwood, which they threw down from above until the mouth of the cave was covered.

Upon it they poured olives, sulphur, spirits, and oil, and finally set a light to the pile. The wind drove the smoke into the cave. The dense vapour filled the whole place so quickly that many had not time to escape by the devious passages which led to the inner recesses of the cave. Husband and wife, parent and child, could but take one last embrace and die. Some escaped into the next chamber and died there. Others, crawling on their hands and knees through narrow passages, found their way to the side chambers and remote recesses of the great cavern, but still the stifling vapour followed them, and within a few minutes of the lighting of the fire, all were dead.

‘Some day I will take you to that cave; the bones are still there. In the great central hall of the cavern a rough altar has been raised, and before it have been heaped the bones of my murdered kinsmen. On those bones and before that altar, at the bidding of my father, I vowed myself again to the sacred cause of Cretan independence. It is a vow I have no wish to break; but even if I had, I would not dare.

‘The next event which left its mark upon my life was, again, a thing which happened before I was born. I had the story from the lips of my mother. In 1866 the monastery of Arkadi was besieged by Suleiman Bey, who came against it with a force of 4,000 Turkish soldiers and 2,000 Bashi-Bazouks. Arkadi was the most ancient and the greatest religious house in Crete, its situation rendered it a

My mother and her two children in the morning of the 12th October no less than 3000 of them were gathered in the monastery. It was then that Arkadi was informed that three hundred fighting men had been sent to keep guard round the rest under the leadership of my grandfather and father, being expected to be expelled to another part of the island. My mother and her two little boys were confided to the care of good Abbot Gabriel, who had vowed that he would kill them with his own hands before he permitted them to fall into the hands of the Turks.

When tidings came of the march of Suleiman Bey, the three hundred men in the district, together with some thirty Greek volunteers, at once went to the help of Abbot Gabriel and his twenty monks, and when the Turks arrived the gates of the monastery were closed against them. Three times Suleiman demanded surrender, promising them their lives. But remembering the women and children, the saintly Abbot Gabriel refused. Then the monastery was bombarded with half a dozen field pieces the Turks had brought with them, but so well had the monks made their barricades and earthworks that little damage was done. Next day the besiegers were joined by reinforcements bringing six twelve-pounder guns, and the bombardment was continued with yet greater vigour.

To cut a long story short, the walls were eventually breached, and Turks and Bashi-Bazouks

poured into the place, filling the central court. The courtyard, the corridors, the cells, even the church, became the scene of desperate hand-to-hand fighting. When all seemed lost, the Abbot, seizing a light, shouted, "Into the hands of God rather than the mercy of the Turk," and fired the magazine. The eastern portion of the building was completely demolished by the explosion—victors and vanquished, men, women, and little children went to their doom together. The rest of the monastery was, however, only shaken, and the battle now became a massacre. Quarter was neither asked nor given, neither age nor sex saved any from the sword. The refectory, into which most of the women and children had been gathered, was soon heaped with their dead bodies.

'My mother had been with the abbot when he blew up the magazine; both of her children were killed by the explosion; she herself, stunned and wounded, was left for dead. Next day some of our people found her lying unconscious amid the blood-stained ruins, and they nursed her back to life; but she went lame to the end of her days. Almost the first lesson she taught me was, that as the future head of the family, it was my duty, when I became a man, to avenge myself on the Turks for the two brothers killed at Arkadi before I was born.

'Now, I'm going to shut up, for it is quite time that both of us went to sleep. Some day, if you will visit me in the mountains, I will show you the scenes of these happenings, and will tell you more

of the things that have made me such a fierce hater'

A few weeks later a small party of British naval and military officers were sent into the interior of the island to negotiate with the Christian insurgents. I was permitted to accompany them, and so enabled to visit Leonidas on his 'native heath'

Mounted on mules, at sunrise we started for the mountains, passing out of the city gates, through the leper city (leprosy is one of the many evils directly due to the Turkish occupation of Crete), across the Christian cemetery with its desecrated graves, beyond the outer line of Turkish outposts, until we reached the foothills. Here we were met by guides who had been sent to lead us to the Christian head quarters, and from this point we were climbing all the way.

At first we saw on every hand signs of the devastation of war—ruined villages, fire-blackened, desecrated churches, and the burned remnants of what had once been an olive garden, which it would take two hundred years to restore to its original glory and fruitfulness. As we mounted higher these signs disappeared, and our guides explained, 'The Turks never get as far as this. They would all be killed before they climbed so high.'

Later we were joined by Father Basil, the fighting chaplain of the 'Holy Company,' renowned for having killed more Turks than any other man in the whole diocese of Candia. A fierce, wild-eyed fanatic, there was nothing about him suggestive of his sacred calling save that his dress was black, and a brass

cross hung by a chain from his neck. Every Cretan insurrection has had its priest heroes. No names are more honoured in story and song than those of such fighting priests as Fathers Zelaois, Gabriel, Melekas, and Basil. With pride this minister of the gospel of peace showed me the notched stock of his rifle, explaining that every notch represented a Turk that he himself had killed. When I mentioned Leonidas,

‘Yes, he’s a great chieftain, a grand fighter. But what a pity he was ever sent to England to be educated; he’s been spoiled with his English ideas about sparing the wounded, taking prisoners, and such foolishness. ‘Still,’ with a shrug, ‘what’s done can’t be helped, and spite of all he’s a fine fighter.’

After a long, steep climb over rough, narrow roads, which even a goat might have been forgiven for thinking dangerous, we reached the insurgent headquarters. The sturdy mountaineers, in their picturesque dress, eagerly crowded round us, and their welcoming shouts of ‘Zeto!’ resounded amongst the mountains. My comrades were conducted to the place where the chieftains waited to give them audience, whilst I was directed to the quarters of Leonidas. I found that he shared a small room, which served as mess and sleeping quarters for himself, three officers of Colonel Vassos’s contingent of Greek Regulars, and four other Cretan chieftains. Their furniture was of the most primitive description, consisting of ammunition boxes for seats, the door of the room propped on stones was their only table, whilst beds they had none, each man sleeping

on the bare floor, wrapped in his sheepskin coat. Their living was in keeping with their furniture, being of the simplest. As one of the Greek officers explained to me:

'You see, you are saved a lot of trouble by the *menu* always being the same. The cook, for one thing doesn't have to puzzle his brains to find unfamiliar names for familiar things. We always have mutton and biscuit, and have had nothing else for months. Everybody else has the same, so there is no unseemly competition. If a man comes to dine with you, you may be quite sure that it isn't the dinner that has fetched him. He has been drawn by real friendship.'

Whilst I waited for the council of the chieftains to break up, and thus free Leonidas to join me, these Greek officers entertained me with story and with jest. We discussed the political situation, the war in Thessaly, the vagaries of 'the Powers,' the vicissitudes of Cretan warfare, the appalling distress amongst the people, the methods adopted for its relief, and the latest Turkish atrocity. It was all very interesting to me, and I found my time of waiting far from tedious.

At last, however, Leonidas put in an appearance, and we went out on the mountain-side to talk. I reminded him of his promise to show me the places that had been the scene of the events he had described in our midnight talk. He replied:

'I cannot do that, for most of them are many miles from here. But I will show you the place

where I was born, and where I spent long periods of my early life. As you know, a great feature of our Cretan warfare is the cave hiding-places. Most districts possess one; many of them are well known to the Turks, but are so inaccessible that the knowledge is of little use to them. I told you of those who died in the cave of Melidoni; now I will show you the cave of Krusonas, which for generations has been the refuge of this borderland, and which has saved innumerable lives. It was in this cave that I was born, and most of my earliest recollections are connected with it. My early childhood is full of memories of sudden flights from the village to the cave. There, for long weeks, we children and the women would live far down from the narrow entrance, which we could see as a distant speck of light, though, as often as not, it was completely obscured by the sturdy form of old Fazal, the cave guard.

‘The cave of Krusonas is very damp and dark, but it has most beautiful stalactites, which to me, as a child, were a source of endless delight. Those days in the bowels of the earth were never days of weariness to me; there was an element of romance about it which captured my imagination. The torch-light on wild faces and picturesque dress, the household stuff heaped in the great main chamber, looking like rich booty gathered from the plain by robber bands, all moved me in a way I find it hard to describe. Then there were the rare days when I was permitted to join old Fazal, the door-guard,

11. LEONIDAS THE CHRISTIAN

listened to the endless tales of war and he told of the achievements of the men of my family in the days of long ago. On these occasions the old man would chant in his hoarse, quavering tones, the wild marching song which the men of the "Holy Company" use to day. His then fathers did two hundred years ago.

Then, with clear, ringing voice Leonidas himself broke into song.

‘On, on, to the war!
On, on, to the war!
Oh, Cretan lads so bold,
With sword in hand, like heroes,
Shout freedom, as of old.’

And far away, high in the mountains, the song was caught up by other voices, and carried into the second verse of what had come to be known as the ‘Song of the Holy Company.’

At last we reached a wild ravine, flanked by masses of grey rock, opening out of the main valley, just where a Turkish block-house keeps watch over the fertile, vine-covered plain. High up on the face of the cliff, which rises sheer from the narrow goat-track, is the entrance to the cave. From the little barbican of roughly piled stones at the foot of the ladder we overlooked more than half Eastern Crete—one of the most superb views in the world. As we stood drinking in the glory of it, Leonidas said:

‘That view is my earliest memory—that view and

one man, he my father—holding this little barbican single-handed against a hundred Turks. My poor lame mother—lamed at Aikadi, you will remember—was meanwhile painfully climbing the ladder with me upon her back. I can remember quite distinctly looking down on the wonderful view, and dimly wondering why my kind father seemed so fierce, and why he was knocking those men with red caps off the goat track into the precipice below.

‘Then, more clearly, comes the recollection of how, when the top of the ladder was reached, for a moment my mother knelt in prayer, then grasped a rifle, and, as my father came running up the ladder, kept up a steady fire on the blue-coated Turks, who were only able to move along the narrow path in single file. How we shouted together in fierce joy whenever one of them suddenly threw up his arms and pitched headlong over the precipice. I only half understood what it all meant, but it remains with me very vividly. When, breathless but unhurt, my father reached the cave, how he embraced my mother, kissed her on the lips, and declared that she was a true mother of heroes, and had killed more Turks than most men in that valley.’

After a visit to the cave, with its hundreds of refugees from the surrounding villages, and an inspection of the sturdy garrison, which was commanded by one of the ‘Holy Company,’ we returned to the insurgent head quarters by another path.

On the way back Leonidas was very silent, and a

shadow rested on his face. When at last we came to a sort of platform on the mountain side, he stopped.

‘Do you see that?’ he said, pointing to a cross deeply cut into the rock. ‘I did that ten years ago. I was little more than a child, but it was then that the cross entered into my soul. I was home from school, spending my summer holidays in the island; my father had been murdered by Bashi-Bazouks the previous year, and I had become the head of the family, though only thirteen years of age. I had an only sister, whom I loved passionately—Maria was her name. She was sought in marriage by a young chieftain from the Sphakiot Mountains, but she would have none of him. One day we discovered the reason. She had another lover, a Turk—the officer commanding yonder block-house. How they became acquainted we never knew; how far their intimacy had gone I cannot tell. One evening, as they parted after their tryst, he was shot by our people.

‘Maria was, of course, brought before a family council for judgement. She made no defence—there was none to make—she loved the Mussulman, and cursed those who had killed him. The sentence was inevitable. It is an unbroken law amongst the Christians of the mountains that the maid who encourages a Turkish lover, dies. She was led by the men of the family to this spot, and I, as head of the house, child though I was, had to stand and see that the sentence was carried out. They shot her standing against

that rock, and she died, as a chieftain's daughter should, showing no fear, craving no mercy.

'I loved her more than anybody else in the world, but I shed no tear. I spoke no word of pity or farewell, we exchanged no parting kiss. The men praised me for it; said that I was worthy of the race from which I had sprung. But the next day, when there was none to know of my doings, I came back to the place, lay on her grave, and wept, kissed the stones that covered her, and carved that cross to mark her grave. Then, in the bitterness of my heart, I swore that I would never rest, never turn back from the killing whilst there was a single Turk left in Crete. Do you understand now? Do you still blame me for finding a Turkish grave a pleasant pillow?'

I took his arm, saying:

'Yes, I quite understand, and I sympathize more than I can ever tell you. But it's all over now. Your vows are lifted, for by to-morrow night there will not be a single Turk left in Crete. As you know, Sir Gerard Noel, the British Admiral, has taken the bit between his teeth and bolted with the "European Concert." Even since the affair of September 6, when British soldiers were massacred in Candia, as well as Cretan Christians, he has, in spite of threats of an European War, in spite of prophecies that he will be repudiated by the British Government, taken matters into his own hands and has settled once for all the Cretan question. For a week past he has been shipping the Turks back to

Constantinople and to-morrow morning the last shipload sails.'

That night I shared quarters with Leonidas and his friends. It seemed to me that I had hardly closed my eyes when I was roused by Leonidas, who whispered:

'Come, don't waken the others. I'm going on an expedition in which I am sure you would wish to join me.'

Outside I found mules saddled and waiting, and, as we trotted off in the darkness, Leonidas explained:

'We are going to the top of Mount Ida to see the last shipload of Turks sail away. This is the greatest day in Cretan history.'

We reached the summit of Mount Ida, where old legend declares that great Zeus was born, just as the sun rose glorious out of the sea. Leonidas drew in deep breaths of the keen mountain air.

'It always does me good to come here,' he said; 'this is the one spot in Crete which is really free. No Turkish foot has ever trod these heights or breathed this air.'

Far below us the island was stretched out like a map—the Sphakiote Mountains, with their glittering snow-peaks; great Dicte, rival to Ida herself, and, lower, Retimo, surrounded by its vine-clad hills; the plain of Messara, with its fertile fields, and the lovely Vale of Arkadi, the grey ruins of the monastery showing amongst the trees, a reminder of the tragedy of thirty years before.

But not for long did these hold our eyes. They were turned towards the sea, where Candia—the ancient Heracleon—girt with grey walls built centuries ago by Venetian conquerors, keeps guard over the roadstead that bears its name. As we looked the first level beams of the rising sun caught the huge cross and golden dome which surmount the cathedral, making them glow like fire.

‘Look,’ exclaimed Leonidas; ‘it is an omen. The reign of the cross has once more begun.’

Then, as we watched, we saw the great troopship, escorted by a British man-of-war, slowly steam out of the roadstead and turn her head towards Constantinople.

‘Thank God,’ murmured my companion; ‘the days of blood and hate are over.’

For a while he stood lost in thought, and I forbore to disturb him. Then I became aware that we no longer had the summit of Ida to ourselves. In twos and threes, coming from all directions, were wild-looking mountaineers. I roused Leonidas, asking:

‘Who are these? What is the reason of their coming?’

He turned with a start, looked at the newcomers with surprise, and then a smile of comprehension lit up his face.

‘It must be the shepherds’ day, and I had forgotten. These are the shepherds who feed their flocks on the slopes of Mount Ida. Wild and rough, stout of limb and brave of heart, they have ever been as free as the air they breathe—no Turkish

oppressor has ever been able to reach them in their mountain fastnesses. But they do not forget that they are kith and kin to the people on the plains below, and their hearts are hot with anger and wrung with pity when they think of the wrong and oppression and tragedy which have made up the lives of their kinsmen for generations past. And so, once a year, they gather at daybreak in the tiny chapel yonder, which is built on the highest point of Mount Ida—a mile at least above sea-level—that they may pray for deliverance for their brethren and the freedom of Crete. For nearly three centuries they and their fathers have so prayed; sometimes hope has been strong, sometimes it has been dead. But to-day, for the first time, the service shall be one of thanksgiving and praise.'

Advancing to the shepherds, and speaking in their own dialect, he said: 'Greeting, patriots! The day for which you and your fathers have prayed so long has at last dawned. Crete is free! The blood of her sons has not been shed in vain. See, that ship bears back to their own land the last of our hated oppressors. Do you understand? Crete is free!'

With a sudden shout the shepherds took up the cry, 'Crete is free! Crete is free!'

A delirium of joy seemed to seize them; they laughed and cried, danced, shouted, and tossed their arms above their heads, embraced one another, shook hands, fired shots wildly in the air. Then, as Father Basil appeared with, 'Peace, my children,' they fell into sudden silence, and reverently filed into the

little church, where, kneeling on the stone floor which had been worn smooth by those who for centuries had thus prayed, they took their part in a simple service of praise and thanksgiving. It was one of the most impressive acts of worship at which I have ever been present.

The service over, Father Basil, Leonidas, and myself were left alone in the grey old church. For some moments Father Basil stood in silent meditation, his hand resting on the altar; then he broke the silence, addressing Leonidas:

‘Chieftain, I have served as the priest of the “Holy Company,” fighting side by side with the flower of the Christian youth, and I think I can claim to have played a man’s part. I know the English priest regards such service as unseemly in one dedicated to God. But the law is not the same in a wild land as in his peaceful country. The shepherd must protect the flock from the savage beasts that would destroy. Now that the wolves are driven forth, with a glad heart I put aside the implements of war. They have been used for God, and I now lay them upon His altar, vowing that from henceforth I, who have done my best to protect His flock, will spend my remaining days in feeding His lambs.’

So saying he divested himself of knife and bandolier of cartridges, and laid them, with his rifle, upon the altar.

Leonidas stepped forward, saying:

‘Father Basil, you have well spoken. They are the arms of a brave soldier of God. In future they

shall hang, as a memorial of a strife that is ended, upon the walls of this church, one of the few which has never been desecrated, and where for so long God's servants have prayed for freedom and peace.'

After a pause, he continued:

'I, too, would register a vow. Whilst still a child I was dedicated to vengeance; now once again I would give myself to Crete. Her need is great. The Turk has gone, but he has left much evil behind him—moral evils, which you, Father Basil, will fight; physical evils, such as leprosy, which kills more of our people than were ever slain in battle. I will return to England in order that I may be trained as a doctor, and then return to fight the scourge which was brought amongst us by our Turkish oppressors. I vow it here before the shepherds' altar, and you, my friends, witness my oath.'

When last I spoke with Leonidas the Christian he was leaving England for Crete, after having completed his medical and surgical training. Since then, from time to time, I have received tidings of his doings, and I have learned that his reputation as Leonidas the Good Physician is as great as ever it was in the days when his fame went throughout all the Cretan land as Leonidas the Captain of the 'Holy Company.'

DARE-DEVIL DAUNT

IN the year 1897 the Cretan Rebellion assumed such proportions that the Great Powers decided to intervene, and, if possible, find a permanent settlement of the question. An International Force was sent to the island to maintain order, and it included a strong British contingent, of which I was a humble member. My introduction to the mess remains very vividly in my memory, for not only was it my first experience of living in an officers' mess, but it was then that I made acquaintance with Captain Daunt, of the Royal Army Medical Corps. The Colonel had introduced us with, 'Daunt, this is Watkins, the Wesleyan Padre. Padre, this is our doctor, Daunt—Dare-Devil Daunt we call him, because he's as mild as milk.'

I turned to meet the benevolent gaze of a stout officer of youthful appearance, with a round, chubby face, gentle beaming eyes, an expression of preternatural innocence, and, most incongruous in such a face, a monocle screwed in his eye. My first thought was, 'What an extraordinary-looking person!' Then, 'Is he a fool?' and finally I decided that the Colonel's description, 'mild as milk,' hit him off exactly.

I found that he was held in extraordinary affection by the whole mess: everybody chaffed him, and he took their chaff in good part, but I soon discovered also that everybody respected him.

'Look, pretty harmless, doesn't he?' said the senior surgeon to me one day. 'But don't you let his silly face deceive you. He's one of the smartest fellows in his corps. I've served with him on the Indian Frontier, and I know. We call him Dare-devil Daunt, just because he doesn't look the part; some day we'll be calling him that in dead earnest, for I don't believe the fellow knows what fear is.'

In the following weeks I came to know Daunt very well, for our work threw us constantly together. In the hospital wards he was a very different person from the good-natured butt of the mess. The patients had a touching confidence in his skill.

'Yes, sir,' a man would say, 'Captain Daunt, he's a marvel. So gentle and pleasant spoken, and when he has to dress a wound, or set a broken leg, his touch is as soft as a woman's. You feel he wouldn't hurt you, not for anything, if he could help it. . . Brave he is, too, for all his gentle ways. I've heard tell that when he was on the frontier he walked three hundred yards under heavy fire, just to get a wounded man a drink of water, and came back with it smiling to himself like, and as he dropped back into cover all he said was, "Dashed bad shots, that's what I call 'em. If they couldn't hit my fat carcass they'd be missing a haystack at two hundred yards."'

The British camp was on the walls of Candia.

Beneath us seethed and roared the great Moham-medan city, with its fifty thousand armed fanatics thirsting for our lives. We were as men who lived on the edge of a volcano, and we never knew when the eruption was likely to take place.

One day, as I was sitting at my tent door looking across the city to the snow-capped mountains beyond, Daunt joined me. He was armed with revolver and sword, and his soldier servant carried a loaded rifle and ammunition.

‘Padre, I’m going for a walk in the town. As you know, the orders are that we must go in pairs, fully armed, and take our servants with loaded rifle and one hundred rounds of ammunition. I want a pal, so get your revolver, call your servant, and let’s be off.’

In a few minutes I joined him.

‘Getting fed up?’ I asked. ‘Why do you want to visit the town? It’s pretty dull in camp, I know, but personally I would rather walk in the country than the town; it smells so bad. Besides the streets are crowded with Bashi-Bazouks, who are none too civil, and only refrain from driving a knife between our shoulders because they are afraid of the consequences.’

‘Find it dull, do you?’ responded my companion. ‘Then I think I can promise you plenty of employment in a few days; it is to find out that we’re visiting the city this afternoon.’

‘Going to look for signs of a rising, are you?’ I chaffed. ‘Acting as intelligence officer as well as

medical officer? How grateful the staff will be to you for your valuable assistance!

He smiled and allowed out way through the scowling jostling crowd. I collided with a big Arab, and was almost knocked off my feet. For a second he glared into my eyes, then spitting on the road he turned with a curse and was lost in the crowd.

'An ugly-looking customer,' I remarked, 'not the sort of chap you would wish to meet on a dark night.'

Daunt's reply was curious. 'Have you been vaccinated lately, Padre?'

'Yes, but why?'

'Ah, that's a good thing. The chap you ran into has smallpox, which, in part, accounts for his irritability, and for the fact that you were so struck with his beauty. See, there's another, and another. About one in seven of these people seem to be in various stages of the disease. It was to find out if it were so that I came for a walk this afternoon. We can go back now. I had five cases this morning of men reporting sick, and they all seemed to me to be sickening for smallpox, but don't mention it to a soul. We'll all have plenty to do in a few days.'

That night in mess Daunt was as cheerful as ever, and nobody would have suspected the weight of anxiety that he carried. As we were about to separate for bed he said:

'By the way, Colonel, I have made arrangements

to start vaccinating the whole force to-morrow morning, and I think I had better begin with you.'

'The dickens you do, do you? Well, let me tell you that even if you are thirsting for a job, you'll have to use your ingenuity in finding another, for I won't consent to such a thing. Begin with me, indeed! It's like your impudence.'

'Yes, sir; I think I'd better start with you. It'll have a good effect on the troops; they'll be more willing when they know their officers have all been done. You see, I fear we're in for a smallpox epidemic. I already have a dozen suspicious cases in hospital, and the town below us is rotten with it. The Padre and I went on a tour of investigation this afternoon, and he will bear me out—about one in seven of the people in the streets have got it, and how many are lying dying in their houses, God only knows.'

In the days that followed Daunt had need of all his skill, and drew heavily upon his inexhaustible store of cheerfulness. The Turkish Military Hospital, of which he had taken possession, was crowded to overflowing, and the compound within its extensive walls was filling fast with tents that were being added to daily. For a while every afternoon was heard the muffled roll of drums and the throb of the sweet, sad music of the Dead March in 'Saul' as we carried yet another brave British soldier to his last long rest among the olive-trees. Then the funerals became so frequent that we ceased to use the band, not desiring to depress the troops by advertising how

heavy our death toll was. Daunt and his two colleagues worked almost ceaselessly day and night. That they did not collapse under the strain was little short of miraculous. The Colonel in those days looked very grim and the expression in his eyes showed how keenly he felt the loss of the men whom he loved almost with a father's love.

One morning Daunt announced at breakfast:

'I think we've turned the corner. For some days the number of cases has been decreasing, and as far as I can work it out, all who were infected before we vaccinated must now be accounted for.'

Two days later it was: 'No fresh cases to-day.' And for us the epidemic was over, though it still raged fiercely in the city below us.

The Colonel urged Daunt to go on leave, 'for,' he said, 'even your jolly, round face is showing the signs of wear and tear.' But the doctor refused.

'We've done with the smallpox, it's true, sir; but we're not through the wood by a long chalk yet. As soon as the weather gets hot we're in for such a dose of enteric fever as none of us have ever seen before. That city is absolutely without any pretence of sanitation, and with the refugees from the country its population is nearly double what it is at normal times. The pariah dogs may keep the place more or less clean under ordinary conditions, but now they cannot cope with it, and refuse is accumulating in the streets. Even now the stench is enough to knock you down, but let the hot weather come, and the enteric in this camp is going

to be far worse than the smallpox. No, I'll stay where I am, and meanwhile get ready for what I see coming.'

Within a month Daunt's prophecy was more than fulfilled—enteric fever of a most malignant type raged through the lines, additional medical help had to be sent from Malta, and every day of the week we gathered in the Christian cemetery beyond the walls to render the last sad offices to our stricken comrades. Once again that grim look had settled on the colonel's face, and Daunt had become so careworn that his best friends would hardly have recognized him.

'I tell you what it is, Colonel,' he said one night as we talked things over in the mess; 'if something isn't done soon, we shall all be dead. The troops are dying like flies. I suppose it isn't possible for us to change our camp? Military reasons render it imperative for us to remain where we are, to use the phraseology of the war correspondent. Yes? I thought so. Well, the only thing left for us to do is to make the beggars clean their town.'

'How's it to be done? '

'Well, if you're game, I can see a way. Suppose you turn out the whole force to-morrow morning and march under arms into the city, then take street by street, and force them to clean the place up at the point of the bayonet.'

'Can't be done, Daunt. It would provoke a riot. The place is like a powder-magazine, and any such action on our part would bring about an explosion.'

Lives would be lost, there would be the dickens of a row with the Foreign Office people, and I should be cashiered.'

'Well, sir, it's the only way, and you know one must run risks. Besides, I don't think the risk is as great as you fear. If we spring the thing on them they'll be so surprised that it'll be over before they've had time to resent it. You know the East as well as I do, and my experience is that high-handed action always goes down with these sort of Johnnies. It's the strong hand that wins both their obedience and respect.'

For awhile the Colonel paced the mess, thinking hard; then his face cleared:

'I believe you're right, Daunt; anyway, I'll risk it. Anything is better than the present state of things. If it precipitates a row, well, "Kismet"; the chances are it would come sooner or later anyway, and it's better to die fighting than to sit and see the fellows dying like rotten sheep and be helpless to stop it. You'll let me have a written report, of course, so that I shall have something to show for justification when I face the music before a Court of Enquiry or they court-martial me.'

'Right oh, sir. I will go and write it at once, and will put things so strongly that even a Quaker would feel that the use of force was justifiable under the circumstances. And, God knows, however strongly it's put, it will be well within the mark.'

At dawn the next morning the astonished city awakened to find the end of every street guarded by

British soldiers with fixed bayonets and loaded rifles, whilst the officer or non-commissioned officer in charge knocked at the doors of the houses, and, in halting Arabic, presented the compliments of the British commandant, and would they oblige him by coming out and kindly cleaning up their street. In a few minutes the whole of Candia was buzzing with excitement—it was like a nest of ants that had been stirred with a stick. Indignant Turks protested in the most vehement language at their command, excited Bashi-Bazouks called Allah to witness that the English Pasha had been smitten of God and gone suddenly mad. Men poured from their houses armed to the teeth, to be met at the end of each street and alley by stolid soldiers with bayonets down at the charge. It was so unexpected, they had had no time to make plans; there was no leader, men advised first one thing and then another, and finally, with a shrug of the shoulders and a muttered ‘Kismet,’ they sullenly did as they were bidden.

Daunt was ubiquitous; everywhere you seemed to meet his round beaming face and ridiculous eyeglass. Now he was explaining to a Turkish gentleman that it was really in his interest that the thing was being done.

‘The beautiful ladies of your harem are likely to sicken and die. The crowded insanitary city is not good for their health. As an enlightened and educated man I’m sure you will help us. We should never think of invading the privacy of your houses. But you, as a man of rank, can order the common

people to clean the place up and especially to bring all the filth out of their back yards,' &c, &c

And before long the leading men in every district were directing the operations, and appearing to find pleasure in the work. Later I found him talking in a gentle paternal manner with a Bashi-Bazouk^o chieftain who had him covered with a loaded rifle.

'Now, really for once you must leave that gun of yours at home. It's sure to get into your way as you superintend the work. Besides, it might go off by accident, and then only think what might happen. If shooting begins, such a lot of you fellows would get killed, and we doctors really shouldn't have time to attend to them. Now be a good chap, bow to the will of Allah; and you know you can always get even with us next time there's a row. At present we're on top, and we've got you in the hollow of our hand.'

Later, I met the same man in charge of the long train of mules, horses, and carriers who were streaming out of the city gates loaded with the filth which had been collected from all parts of the city.

The Colonel also seemed to be in all places at the same time, and to all and sundry he explained that his Principal Medical Officer was a man of vast experience, of extraordinary skill, a scientific man famous throughout the countries of the West, and that to disobey his orders was to sin against Allah—was, in short, flying in the face of Providence.

Soon the sullenness of the people gave way to excitement, and they began to treat the thing as a

great joke. With laughter, chaffing, and song they gave themselves to the work, and the Colonel turned to me with a sigh of relief.

'Thank God, the danger's over. But it's been a near thing. One shot fired and the fat would have been in the fire.'

Then a breathless Turkish officer arrived on the scene. His Excellency the Turkish Governor desired the presence of the British Commandant at the palace to give an explanation of the extraordinary happenings in the city. He was followed by a Russian officer, with a similar request from the Commandant of the Russian section of the International Force, and before he had finished delivering his message an Italian officer was saluting and presenting the compliments of his Commandant. The Colonel groaned.

'Now the band begins to play,' he murmured, 'and I suppose I must go and smooth down all these chaps. Of course, I ought to have consulted them, and all that; and, of course, if I had done so, the city would never have been cleaned. Tell Major Stewart where I've gone, and that he's now in command. He and Daunt should be able to see the thing through without further help from me. I must now try and settle the International complications.'

It was a very tired company that gathered in the officers' mess that night, but all were in high spirits. Daunt declared he had had the time of his life.

'A most interesting experience I call it,' he declared; 'and really, there are no end of nice people

in the town. I quite palled up to several Turkish Effendis that I met in the course of business, and one dear old Bashi-Bazouk chieftain has promised to shoot me when the next rising takes place. Then the Colonel made no end of a reputation for me. I'm thinking of chucking the service and starting a private practice in Candia. Quite a number of the leading townspeople asked me if I was the famous physician the British Pasha had spoken of, and if so, would I spare some of my precious time, which they understood was devoted to the pursuit of science, in order that I might visit their harems and prescribe for ladies who were sick unto death. I've a book full of engagements already, and can see my way to quite a lucrative practice.'

During the following days the Colonel was very busy. Having cleaned the town he now had to take steps to secure that it should be kept clean. Also his correspondence had become unusually heavy; what he called the diplomatic complications resulting from his action seemed daily to increase.

'Look here, Daunt,' he said; 'you've landed me in the dickens of a mess. I've stirred up a perfect nest of hornets. I've the whole blessed European Concert buzzing round my head, and demanding my carcase. I've apologized as much as self-respect will permit; I've promised not to do it again; and now comes a cable from the War Office demanding an explanation of these "unfortunate happenings."'

Daunt grinned his sympathy.

'I'm awfully sorry, sir. But if you want my ad-

vice, it is, take a leaf out of the book of the wily Turk; delay answering as long as ever you can. Hang things up for another ten days, and then I'm prepared to stake my professional reputation that the enteric epidemic will be at an end, and you will be able to give a reason for your action which would find its way even into the head of a Foreign Office clerk or satisfy a Secretary of State. If after that they drop on you, why, I've got a pal in Parliament—a decent chap he is, too, though he does belong to that talking shop—and he'll take care that questions are asked—"Is the Secretary for Foreign Affairs aware that a distinguished military officer has been reprimanded and deprived of his command simply because he took the necessary steps to stop an epidemic of enteric fever, which, if not stayed, would have completely decimated the force under his command?"* How's that for a question to make 'em squirm? 'Pon my word, I don't know but that I'll go into the House myself when I've finished in the Service. There are many bigger fools than I am who are doing well at the game.'

Ten days later Daunt was able to announce that his prediction was true; there were no fresh cases of enteric, and the general health of the force had marvellously improved. The Colonel's letters to the Foreign Office at last seemed to have satisfied the official mind, and of Daunt he had written in such a way that when the next list of Birthday Honours was published, he was gazetted a C.M.G., as we

challenged to tell him a reward for having acted as Chief Scavenger of Candia.

Now followed days of almost unthinkable monotony as Daunt himself said

'The troops are in such disgustingly good health that I am in great danger of forgetting the little medicine I ever knew. I don't want another epidemic but this absolute loafing is enough to send a man on the drink or cause him to commit suicide.'

As a matter of fact he was by no means as idle as he pretended. For the civilian practice of which he had spoken in jest had become a reality, and practically every afternoon of the week was spent in the city below us, where he won a tremendous reputation amongst these people, to whom the achievements of modern science were nothing less than miraculous. To walk through the streets with Daunt was a revelation of the position he had won for himself. Men salaamed before him as if he had been his excellency the governor himself. In the bazaar he was served with the best at the lowest prices, and the proprietor would himself escort him to the door of his shop, and call down all the blessings of Allah upon his head for having deigned to honour his place of business with his beneficent presence.

'Rum beggars, aren't they?' Daunt would say; 'their gratitude is quite touching. Yet if to-morrow night there were a rising and a massacre, they would cut my throat with the utmost cheerfulness. Perhaps they'd let me off the torture and mutilation part of

their usual programme, in consideration of past services. But they would never dream of sparing my life.'

One day Daunt dashed into my tent in a state of wild excitement.

'Come on, Padre; I've got a job at last. Boiler explosion on a ship in the harbour; no end of damage done. Job for you, too, I expect, so bring your prayer-book or whatever it is you need in cases of emergency.'

As we passed the hospital we were joined by a sergeant and several orderlies of the R.A.M.C., carrying the field surgical and medical panniers.

'Ah, that's right, sergeant,' said Daunt; 'we never know what we may want in a job of this sort.'

When we reached the quay, Daunt asked several loungers if they could tell him on which ship the accident had occurred. But they looked at him uncomprehendingly, so he called a boat, and told the boatman to row us to the ship on which there had been an explosion. The man shook his head.

'My Arabic must be dashed bad,' said the doctor; 'they don't any of 'em seem able to understand me. I'd better try my best Turkish,' but the result was no better. 'Then row me to that ship there; perhaps they will know.'

When we were close alongside we hailed, and after a while a head surmounted by a red fez appeared over the side, and in a languid manner asked what we wanted.

'A boiler explosion,' roared Daunt; 'where is it?'

'Dunno,' replied the head, and disappeared from view.

We tried the next ship, with results that were no more encouraging, and Daunt began to get exasperated. He ordered his boatman to talk to the skipper, for it was apparent he did not understand us. Then followed a voluble conversation in which, as far as we could make out, our boatman was telling the Turkish skipper that Daunt was a very learned physician, but that evidently much learning had turned him mad, and what he really wanted Allah alone knew. At last there appeared at the gangway a very polite Greek, who could talk some English, and he assured us that we should find what we wanted at the Turkish man-of-war which was moored in the midst of the harbour. So we rowed towards it; as we passed various ships we hailed them, but the only result appeared to be that they began hastily to pull up their ladders and get in their boats.

'Looks as if they were all getting ready for sea,' said the sergeant. 'I suppose the explosion has scared them.' When we got near the man-of-war we could see that she was cleared for action, and a hail came across the water in broken English, the purport of which was:

'You sheer off, or we'll fire into you!'

'Well, I'm dashed!' exclaimed Daunt; 'has everybody gone mad? Look at them on the quay, too; they seem very excited, and there's quite a crowd gathered since we left.'

'Look here,' he shouted, 'is there anybody aboard

‘Of you who can talk English? For you don’t seem to understand my Turkish or Arabic. I want a ship where there’s a boiler explosion, so that I can attend to the injured. I’m a doctor.’

A drawling voice in very good English answered:

‘Sorry we can’t oblige you, but anyway, it can hardly be called a reasonable request. You English are pretty unreasonable, but, as you would say in your country, this is about the limit. What’s your game, anyway? My advice to you is, to get back to your camp as quick as you can, before the town rises on you. We don’t want to interfere, but as everybody in the harbour thinks you are a band of deserters trying to capture a ship in which to escape from the island, you are not likely to get a very courteous welcome if you attempt to board any more ships in the port. For our part, it is our duty to tell you that as guard ship responsible to His Excellency the Governor for the safety of the port, we shall open fire upon you if you make any further attempts upon the shipping.’

‘Well, I’m jiggered,’ exclaimed Daunt, as he sat down gasping. ‘If this doesn’t beat cock-fighting! What the dickens does it all mean?’

‘Beg pardon, sir,’ said the sergeant, apologetically, ‘I’ve been thinking——’

‘Have you?’ snapped Daunt; ‘it’s like your impudence, and besides, it’s unnatural. During all the years I’ve known you, you’ve never thought before. But to-day nothing surprises me. Come, let’s know what it is you’ve been thinking.’

'Well, sir, do you know what date it is?'

'Date! Bless the man, what's the date got to do with it?' roared Daunt.

'Nothing, perhaps, sir,' faltered the sergeant, 'but it's the first of April—All Fools' Day, sir.'

For a few moments I trembled for Daunt's life. The veins stood out on his neck and forehead until I feared an attack of apoplexy. Then, suddenly, he became calm, and in sharp, quiet tones he said:

'Row back to the quay, and be smart about it.'

When we reached the landing-place, there was that in Daunt's face which made the hostile, threatening crowd fall back before him, and a lane was made, through which we passed in silence. Nothing was said during the walk back to camp, and when we reached the hospital the sergeant and his men saluted silently and left us, the sergeant muttering under his breath:

'Somebody's going to be made to skip for this, or I don't know the P.M.O. (Principal Medical Officer).'

As we entered the mess we were greeted by a shout, 'Look here, you fellows, what do you make of this? Bruce, of the Royal Engineers, has had a wire from the Governor-General asking if he will take over the post of Inspector-General of Cretan Telegraphs. Whilst we were puzzling over it, for there are precious few telegraphs for anybody to inspect, who should burst in on us but Maitland, of the Fusiliers, who had just had an offer of the job of Chief of the Gendarmerie; then followed Dowler,

who is mess president of the Irish; he had received a cable from Mortimer's, the Army Contractors at Malta, advising him of the despatch of a consignment of wine as ordered by him for the Mess. He hasn't ordered any. The consignment is of tremendous proportions, and apparently consists of the most expensive wines on the market. He came to ask if we could help him out by taking over some of it, but it would be ruin. Such tipple is far beyond our means. Then young Coombes comes galloping in from the country, to ask what the dickens his orders mean. "To occupy the Monastery of Peddiada, and if need be carry it at the point of the bayonet," and he and his men have been living in the monastery for a month past. What do you make of it?'

'April Fool's Day,' grunted Daunt. 'I've just been down to the harbour looking for a boiler explosion that never took place, and jolly near got shot as a pirate for my pains. I suppose, Padre,' turning to me, 'you've not been offered the Archbishopric of Canterbury by any chance? No? Well, it shall be counted to him for righteousness that he spared the cloth; but so far as I can see, all the other departments have been let in. Ah! Yes. Here comes the Officer Commanding the Army Service Corps. Hullo, Parkes, have you just got orders to be ready with stores for the immediate mobilization of an army corps?'

'Well, not that exactly, but something almost as mad. My C.O. at Malta must have gone clean off

his head—his cable must have been sent when he^o was suffering from delirium.'

'Not at all,' said Daunt; 'it's just a little pleasantry on the part of one of our brother officers—it's All Fool's Day.'

'But,' spluttered one of the others, 'it can't be. It's preposterous. We're all senior officers, and nobody would presume to take such a liberty. Besides, we are under "active service" conditions, and such a breach of discipline would be most serious. Court-martial, followed by dismissal from the Service, would be the very least.'

'Just so,' said Daunt; 'but let us compare the messages we have received. Yes! As I thought, all are written on either Army Telegraph Forms or Eastern Telegraph Forms. Who are doing the cable guard to-day?'

'We are,' replied Dowler, of the Irish.

'Who is in command of the detachment?'

'Why, young O'Connor,' faltered Dowler, comprehension dawning in his eyes. 'The silly young fool, he's done for himself this time!'

'Gentlemen, I don't think we need inquire further. O'Connor is in command of the detachment guarding the submarine cable and the Eastern Telegraph Offices, and could lay his hands on as many telegraph forms as he liked. This is his method of amusing himself during what is certainly a very monotonous and dreary duty.'

'But he'd never dare,' exclaimed the Commanding Royal Engineer, 'he's only a second lieutenant.'

'Dare?' grinned Daunt; 'then you don't know the breed that come from County Cork, does he, Dowler? Did you never hear of the prank this same light-hearted gentleman played when that troopship called a few weeks ago? Amongst others who landed was a parson—a sort of acting-chaplain, I believe he was. Whilst prowling about the lines he got hold of O'Connor. They had conversation, and the Padre suggested to our young friend that to one so young the temptations of camp life must be very great, and urged him to sign the pledge. O'Connor rose to the occasion at once, took deep interest in the good gentleman's words, and finally proceeded to confess to him a number of crimes which he invented on the spur of the moment. The poor chap was better fitted for the post of nurse-maid than that of Army chaplain, and he simply bolted greedily all that O'Connor had for him, and was unspeakably shocked. Finally the youth got rid of him, and what does he then do but go to the sergeant of the guard and say, "Sergeant, there's a fellow loafing round the lines; he looks rather like a parson, but he's really a Greek trader trying to sell drink to the troops. Pass the word that anybody finding him is to clap him at once into the guard tent and keep him there till the Orderly Officer makes his rounds."

'Within half an hour they'd bagged their man and shoved him in the guard tent. He protested that he was a chaplain, but the sergeant of the guard was very rude in the things he said to him.

In spite of all his protests, they kept him in the guard tent for over an hour, and it was only when the Orderly Officer came round that he was released. He was mad to see the Commandant, and was ready to make no end of a row. Fortunately for O'Connor, the Padre arrived on the scene, talked him over, persuading him to take no further action, and promised to talk to O'Connor himself. Probably that's why the Padre isn't in this business. O'Connor had already had enough of his "powers of reproof."

'Still, we can't let this pass, don't you know,' fumed the Engineer officer. 'Disrespect to superior officers, playing the fool with the name of the Governor-General, misusing the wires on active service. Why, the more you think of it the more monstrous it is.'

'Quite true,' said Daunt, 'and nobody has been fooled more than I have, and nobody resents it more. Still, he's a smart boy, a bit light-hearted and irresponsible perhaps, but he'll make a fine soldier. He'd be a loss to the service, wouldn't he, Dowler? The Irish, I'm sure, are not anxious to lose him.'

'No, they're not,' answered Dowler, looking gratefully at Daunt. 'If we can save him I hope we shall. But once let it come to the official knowledge of the Commandant, and he's done for. They're sure to break him, and, speaking as an officer, I'm bound to say they ought to break him.'

'Well,' said Daunt; 'suppose we send for the youth, and deal with him ourselves. Surely we ought to be equal to giving him such a lesson as he

'will never forget. You others are all senior to me, so you shall fire your shots first, and then I'll wind up with a few gentle words to him for the sake of his mother.'

Exactly what took place none of us could ever learn, but O'Connor looked very white and subdued when he came from the interview, and for days after, to use the elegant description of one of his brother subalterns, he 'went about with his tail between his legs.' At a later date he confided to his special pal, young Jones, of the Welsh Fusiliers, 'Never again! I'd rather be broke than face it. It wasn't that I couldn't stand the ragging of the C.R.E. (Commanding Royal Engineers), or of old Dowler, and the rest of 'em, but when they'd all finished, Daunt started. He talked in his gentle way, felt my pulse, looked at my tongue, examined the bumps on my head, told the rest of 'em what he'd found there, until it dawned on me that he was trying to prove to 'em all that I was insane; not responsible for my actions; and under the circumstances I was to be pitied rather than blamed. He condoled with old Dowler on the Regiment being afflicted with a subaltern in my mental condition, until Dowler said, "Great Scot, Daunt! If he's as bad as that, you'd better have him in hospital, and put him under observation." At first I thought he was pulling my leg, and I know now that of course he was. But he went at it so solemnly and gently, and with such an air of sympathetic regret, that before he'd finished he'd convinced me and every-

body else present, and I believe had almost convinced himself. The C.R.E. actually gripped my hand at parting, and poor old Dowler was almost reduced to tears. I left that room the worst scared man that ever walked—firmly convinced that if I wasn't insane, I stood a good chance of being so if I didn't ease down and live quietly. I believe the rest of them were rather raggy when Daunt explained to them that he'd only been scaring me. They'd all been so taken in. Perhaps that's one reason why they've never cared to talk about it since.'

Things had become so quiet in Crete by the summer of 1898, that the Powers began to withdraw their contingents. The British force was at last reduced to half a battalion of Highlanders, and I, in company with the rest of the garrison, returned again to Malta. We went without regrets, for there were rumours of a campaign in the Soudan under Kitchener, and all were anxious to be in it. Daunt we left to look after his few Highlanders and continue his ever-growing civilian practice in Candia.

'Like my luck,' he said at parting. 'Most of you fellows will be marching to Khartoum before the year's out, winning no end of glory, whilst I am prescribing for Bashi-Bazouks' babies, or attending to the ladies of the Turkish Governor's harem.'

Ten months later I was serving with Kitchener's force in the Soudan. The battle of Omdurman had just been fought, and, wearied by ten days of

Desert marching, culminating in the great battle, the whole force was enjoying a few days' well-earned rest. Our rest was rudely broken by an urgent message. The trouble in Crete had broken out once more, the Mohammedans of Candia had risen in the night, massacred the Christian population, the half battalion of Highlanders had been cut up, and every available regiment must be hurried down Nile, to be despatched to Crete without delay. When we reached Cairo the first thing that met us in the newspapers was the name of Daunt.

'Ah,' said Major Stewart, 'didn't I tell you, Padre, that the day would come when we should be calling him Dare-devil Daunt in sober earnest? He's had his chance sooner than I expected, and, by Jove, he appears to have made the very most of it. If he doesn't get the V.C. it will be a scandal.'

The details of the story, however, we only obtained when a few days later we landed in Candia. Daunt himself was very reticent upon the subject, and about all we could get out of him was:

'Yes; we had no end of a time. It really was a very pretty fight. And my chaps put up a good defence, especially when you remember that they're non-combatants. The patients, too, were fine. For, you know, it isn't exactly fun to a sick man to have to fight for his life, whatever it may be for the rest of us.'

His staff-sergeant, Miller, however, was quite ready to talk, and was enthusiastic on the subject.

'You see, sir, it was like this. After you'd all

left things got quieter than ever here, and Captain Daunt he got into the habit of spending most of his time doctoring the townspeople, and what not. He had a pretty varied practice, too—everything from leprosy down to pulling out teeth. I often went with him and acted as his assistant, especially when he'd got a big operation on. A wonderful surgeon he is too, and I ought to know for I've been through the hospitals in three campaigns. Why, some of those operations of his were fair eye-openers. Perhaps his best was an operation on the favourite wife of a Turkish Bey in the town. Even the captain himself was pleased, for he said to me one day, "Staff-sergeant, the Bey's wife is making a fine recovery. We shall begin to fancy ourselves as surgeons soon. Eh? What! I'm thinking that we're the boys to make the swells of Harley Street sit up."

'One day, when visiting the Bey's wife, she had a chance of speaking to him, and, in a frightened whisper, she said, "You've saved my life, and it is little that I can do to show my gratitude, but as you return to the British camp look at the houses that are nearest to your lines."

'You bet he was startled and puzzled. He'd lived long enough in the East to know that such a tip meant a good deal more than appeared on the face of it, so as he walked back to camp he used his eyes, and he found that every house that faced our lines, and that surrounded the hospital, was loop-holed.

'At once he went off to the officer commanding

the troops, to report what he had seen. Unfortunately the Commandant was away on leave, and the officer in command had only just arrived in the island. He was of the sort that didn't like taking the tip from non-combatants; besides, he didn't know Captain Daunt, and, I suppose, like many others, was deceived by the look of him. Thought he was nervous, and as good as told him that he was more suited for a quiet civilian practice, with croquet and afternoon tea, than for the rough-and-tumble of active service.

'But the captain, he stuck to it. "You can see for yourself, sir; every house is loop-holed, and I'm ready to swear that they were not so less than a week ago." But the commanding officer pooh-poohed the whole thing. Then our captain said, "Very well, sir; it's no business of mine. But I must insist upon arms and ammunition being served out to the R.A.M.C. orderlies and to the patients in hospital." This was refused, but Captain Daunt showed by the Queen's Regulations that he was within his rights in making such a demand, and at last the commanding officer agreed, and we were served out with rifles and ammunition.

'Two days later the rising came. Ever since Captain Daunt had received his warning he had slept in the hospital. During the day he went about the town attending to his patients, just the same as if nothing was in the wind. When I sort of suggested to him that it was rather like running risks, he'd laugh and say, "Not a bit of it, staff-sergeant.

You've got the pumps. Amongst my patients I may pick up some useful information, and besides, when the fun begins, it will be sure to be in the middle of the night. These Johnnies always start in the dark."

'The night it did come the captain got back to hospital from mess very early. He at once sent for me. "Staff sergeant" he said "if I can read the signs aright, it's coming to night. The place has been seething with suppressed excitement all day. Nobody is to go to sleep to-night. The wall of the hospital compound must be constantly patrolled, the gates harricaded, and arms and ammunition served out to every man in the hospital. Above all, don't show any lights in the windows, or they'll be able to pot us from the flat roofs of the neighbouring houses."

'The silence which now brooded over the city seemed to us to be oppressive and ominous. This was probably because our nerves were on the stretch, and because we were straining eyes and ears in the darkness to get the first warning of attack. Several times it seemed to us that bodies of men were being mustered in the street below, but, if so, it was done so silently that nobody who was not expecting it would have spotted it.

'Suddenly a rocket went up, bursting over the great golden dome of the Cathedral. "The signal," whispered the captain, and even as he said it the great gates leading from the street into the compound began to creak and groan under heavy pressure from without. "Good thing we harricaded those

'gates," muttered the P.M.O.; "for if we hadn't they'd have been burst in by this time. There must be a pretty crowd of them shoving to make 'em bend like that. But shove away, my boys, you aren't going to get in that way."

'By this time the city was humming like a beehive that's been suddenly stirred up. In the direction of the Canea gate there was a great light in the sky, and sounds of a ragged, dropping rifle-fire. "They're burning the Christian quarter," said the captain; "God help the women and children, for that means massacre, and worse. The things that are taking place over yonder won't bear thinking about."

'Then a sudden burst of volley firing. "Ah! that means one of our outposts is being attacked. Yes, and there's another," as from the opposite direction there came similar sounds. "There won't be many of those poor fellows left by morning. For no outpost is more than thirty strong, and none of them are in a good position for defence. I wonder when our turn is coming. The chaps outside are strange and quiet. Ah! Would you?" as a sudden glare of light at the gates showed that they were attempting to burn them down. "Come on, staff-sergeant, we must stop that." And with myself and half-a-dozen men he rushed to that wing of the hospital which commanded the gate. "Now, don't waste your fire; we haven't any too much ammunition. But shoot whenever you see a figure show up against the light; at this close range we ought never to miss."

In the next ten minutes we were pretty busy,* and I think most of our shot told, for there was a tidy heap of dead lying round the gate when dawn came. And we saw a fair number of wounded crawling about in the uncertain light. "Now, sergeant," said the captain, "you keep them busy while I go and put the fire out. I want three volunteers," he shouted—all offered themselves. So selecting three men he went down into the yard, as quietly as possible removed the barricade, then, suddenly throwing open the gates, dashed out with a yell, scattering the fire in all directions, and before the Bashi-Bazouks had recovered from their astonishment, he and his men were back again in safety, the gates shut and barricaded once more.

'Now the enemy seemed to have withdrawn from the streets. They occupied the houses which surrounded us on three sides, and the city wall, which commanded us on the fourth side. From the flat roofs of the houses and from the wall towering above us, they could shoot right down into the compound and into the hospital. Soon every window in the place was shattered, and bullets were humming about the wards like bees. Captain Daunt made us get all the patients out of bed and put them to lie on the floor as close to the walls as possible. "It would be such dashed hard luck to get potted when you were lying on your back," he said to one poor chap, who didn't want to be moved, "and we'll make you as comfy as we can with your mattress on the floor."

‘Then he made us a sort of speech, in his gentle, quiet, conversational way. He told us his plan of campaign. “Every man who can stand must handle a rifle; those who are too weak to fight can load rifles for the others. We’re in a pretty tight fix, but it’s a good position to hold, and as they haven’t got artillery to batter down the place with, we can easily hold it as long as our ammunition lasts. Before that is finished help is sure to come. Never shoot unless you are sure to hit, and don’t expose yourselves at the windows more than you can help.”

‘All the time the enemy kept up a regular fusilade, but we lay low and only fired when we could distinguish a figure against the sky-line or in the open. With daylight the rifle-fire became hotter than ever, and they made several determined rushes to carry the place by storm. Wonderful well-plucked chaps they were too. It was extraordinary the way they came on—and they died in heaps in the streets all round us. We fired until our rifles were hot, and we were weary with firing, some of the patients keeping at it until they dropped unconscious, and men who were too weak to crawl lay on their backs loading rifles for the other fellows. At last the enemy drew off, and we had a spell. The captain, he had a look round his defences, took stock of the ammunition we had left, and attended to the wounded.

‘He didn’t say anything, but I knew he must be getting anxious, for we’d used more than half our ammunition, and there was no sign of help com-

ing "I expect they've got their hands full without troubling about us," he said in reply to a remark of mine. "It'll take them all their time to keep their own end up against such odds. Remember, the whole force, all told, is only four hundred strong, and there are fifty thousand of these Johnnies, and every man Jack of them armed. Our only chance is to hold out until men-of-war can be sent from Canea. The Eastern Telegraph people are sure to have wired, and in a few hours now they should be here."

'By and by we could see signs of excitement amongst the men on the wall above us, and soon the reason was apparent. A wounded Highlander, sole survivor from one of our outposts, was crawling painfully along under the shadow of the wall, hoping to reach us and safety. "Poor chap," said Captain Daunt; 'daylight has come an hour too soon for him. Under cover of the dark he might have reached us; now he hasn't a chance. I wonder why they don't finish him off; at this range they simply can't miss him. By Jove, the incarnate devils are playing with him, as a cat does with a mouse. Look at the swine."

'True enough, they were firing all round the poor chap, trying not to hit him, and as he dodged and stumbled, running this way and that like a hare dodging the dogs, they shrieked aloud with laughter, and some of them literally rolled on their backs, kicking up their heels in their glee. We stopped the laugh in some of their dashed throats with a volley

which sent a tidy number of 'em squirming on their backs, and no longer in glee.

'Now we could see they were getting ready for something or other. On a part of the wall, in full view of the hospital, they were putting up a rough cross. We were distinctly puzzled as to what their game was; then we saw some of them creeping and crawling under cover of rocks and broken ground towards where the wounded Highlander now lay exhausted.

"My God!" burst from the P.M.O.; "they're going to take him alive, mutilate, torture, and crucify him, in full view of us all. Look here, you chaps, I can't stand that. If they were only going to kill him that wouldn't matter much. We've all got to die sometime or other, and it doesn't make much difference when. But torture and mutilation, that's another thing. I'm going to fetch him in. Staff-sergeant, you're now in command, and if I don't come back, you know exactly what to do. Now, two chaps to volunteer—one to open the gate, and one to go with me to help carry him in, for he looks too heavy for me to manage."

'It was all over in a few minutes. We peppered them for all we were worth so as to distract their attention and to spoil their aim. But the man who unbolted the gates fell dead, shot through the head. The chap who went out with the P.M.O. only got half way there when he curled up with a bullet through his heart. Captain Daunt himself got a bullet through his leg, but he reached the man, got

him somehow or other on his back, and staggered back to the hospital. As he closed the gates he was hit again in the arm, but he just had strength sufficient to get the bolts in their places, and to drag himself and the Highlander into cover before the compound was literally swept with lead, and bullets pattered in the ward, like rain.

'For another two hours we held on, but we knew the end was drawing near. Suddenly, away out at sea, we heard a shot, and the flight of a shell over the city. One man-of-war, if not more, had arrived! The effect was to make the Bashi-Bazouks throw themselves on the hospital with greater recklessness and fierceness than ever. They feared to lose the revenge for their heavy losses which they had thought was within their grip. How much longer we fought I don't know—my mind became a blank. I was a machine, firing mechanically, and doing just what I was told by the captain, who seemed to be everywhere at the same time.

'Then the sound of a cheer, the regular tramp of troops in step, coming down the street at the double; the Bashi-Bazouks melted away; the compound was full of marines and blue-jackets; and Captain Daunt was smacking me on the back, saying, "Staff-sergeant, you're a ripper. If you don't get the Distinguished Conduct Medal out of this, it won't be my fault."

If Daunt had had his deserts he would have received the Victoria Cross. That he did not do so is one of the mysteries that has often been discussed

in military messes. He himself, however, is quite content with the Distinguished Service Order, and promotion to the rank of major.

'You know, they can't be giving a V.C. to every Johnnie who risks his life for the sake of a comrade.

' It would make the thing too cheap, don't you know. Besides, if I earned it, so did every other chap in the hospital, and they couldn't give it to us all.'

